Yuri Kryanev

CHRISTIAN ECUMENISM

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INTRODUCTION

The ecumenical movement is undoubtedly one of the most important processes taking place in religious life today.

The term "ecumenical" (from the Greek *oikoumene* meaning "the universe, the inhabited world") has always been broadly used, although it has had a variety of meanings. However, in the 20th century it has come to be used primarily to mean the movement to unify the Christian churches, a movement coordinated by the World Council of Churches (WCC). At present, the World Council of Churches joins together the majority of Protestant and Orthodox churches, the Armenian Church, and several other churches.

The processes taking place in today's capitalist society are reflected in the life of religious organisations, all the more so in that the ecumenical movement is historically linked, first and foremost, with Protestantism, that is, with the bourgeois form of Christianity. The contradictions between the two social systems—capitalism and socialism, the internal

contradictions within capitalism, the contradictions between the developed capitalist countries and the developing countries, and other such contradictions serve to intensify the socio-political differentiation of the Western world. At the same time, state-monopolistic organisations like the Common Market, unstable compromises between alliances of the major capitalist countries, and other attempts at capitalist coordination, given the deepening general crisis of bourgeois society, encourage the development of integrative processes.

The contemporary religious crisis is closely linked to the general crisis in bourgeois society, which is accompanied by the secularisation of public life, spreading indifference to religion, and growing atheism. Ecumenism is a reflection of the crisis of individual Christian groups and tendencies with long traditions, as well as the crisis of religious ideology in general. Christianity "under fire" has produced a response from religious circles, which is shown in particular by the Christian unity movement. The activity carried on by the executive organs of the ecumenical movement represents one attempt to overcome this crisis.

In analysing the ecumenical movement, one must take into account the relations between the executive organs of the World Council of Churches and the UN, UNESCO, and other international organisations, as well as the world-wide influence of the technological revolution, means of communication, and mass information.

Contemporary religious literature[1] does not disclose the real reasons for the rise and development of the ecumenical movement. It explains the movement by taking as its point of departure "pure" Christian faith. The influence of social, political, and ideological factors, especially the influence of the struggle between the two social systems on the development of the ecumenical movement is either undervalued or ignored.

In analysing ecumenism we must take into account processes taking place in religious life itself, which today is criss-crossed by complex, contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, there is the differentiation process (the appearance of new religious tendencies, the formation of national churches in countries freed from colonial domination, and so on). On the other hand, there is a tendency towards unity and integration. Various groupings are emerging in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and so on. The tendency towards integration in Christianity is most vividly expressed in the ecumenical movement.

Christianity—one of the world's most widespread and influential religions—is not a single whole. Dur-

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[1] There is a large body of periodical and non-periodical literature published by the WCC and other religious organisations. For the most part they present materials from the various WCC assemblies, conferences, and consultations, its various subdivisions, commissions, and committees, as well as words by church figures on individual aspects of the ecumenical movement. The most important are historical studies of the ecumenical movement.

ing the early centuries of its existence it was composed of many different tendencies and sects. Then Christians succeeded in achieving a formal unity, although in fact this unity did not exist. But in the 11th century, the Christian Church split into the Catholic and Orthodox churches due to changing conditions in Western and Eastern Europe's social and political life. As a result of the Reformation during the 16th and 17th centuries, various tendencies developed within the third major branch of Christianity—Protestantism. The Protestant churches include the Anglican, Lutheran, and Calvinist churches, as well as the Baptist and Methodist organisations, and others. The process of division within the Christian churches is still continuing today.

Beginning with the 19th century, and especially in the mid-20th century the tendency towards integration of Christian organisations, their practical activity and ideology, intensified.

As mentioned above, the ecumenical movement is supported first and foremost by the Protestant organisations: Methodists, Baptists, and the like. Religious organisations with a mystical or eschatological orientation, stressing the exceptional nature of their faith and remaining within the boundaries of their local and narrowly confessional communities, take a negative view of the idea of Christian unity. True, there has been recent progress in the Pentecostal and Adventist churches in recent years (their discussions with the World Council of Churches, and the recent joining of the WCC by several Latin American Pente-

costal denominations).[1] But on the whole they continue to remain outside the ecumenical framework.

The executive bodies of the ecumenical movement must also deal with Christian groups of various types, above all with integration at the level of "international confessionalism" and "inter-confessional organisations" at the national level within countries.

Religious organisations of the first type include such international Protestant organisations as the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council, the World Presbyterian Alliance, the Baptist World Alliance, and others similar to them, as well as the Pan-Anglican (Lambeth) Conferences at the international level.

Organisations of the second type are "national councils of churches". Among them the most prominent are the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States and the British Council of Churches.

These organisations work together with the World Council of Churches. Many of their prominent figures are also WCC leaders. For instance, the ex-President of the Lutheran World Federation, Franklin Clark Fry, was also chairman of the WCC Central Committee. The British Council of Churches is traditionally headed by the Primate of All England. Its leaders (William Temple, Michael Ramsey) took part in founding and leading the WCC.

However, there are also organisations of Christian

[1] Denomination—a religious organisation intermediate in structure between a church and a sect.

churches whose leaders oppose ecumenism, for instance, the American Council of Christian Churches in the United States, made up of highly conservative Christian denominations.

In order to spread religious ideas and popularise the bourgeois way of life in the developing countries, the WCC works together with religious ecumenical organisations like the Pacific Conference of Churches, which has existed since 1966, and the All Africa Conference of Churches (founded in 1963). In addition, it maintains relations with "branch" international religious organisations (the World Student Christian Federation and others). Harold Fey, a noted theorist of ecumenism, focuses attention on the need for close links between the WCC and other international religious organisations ("world families", as Fey expresses it): "There is a necessary connection between world families and the World Council of Churches. Both are elements in the ecumenical movement."[1]

The ecumenical efforts made by the Christian organisations have not escaped the Vatican's attention. One of the 16 documents adopted by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) is a Decree on Ecumenism.

Finally, Christian ecumenism is influenced by the integrative and differential processes taking place in the non-Christian confessions—especially in Islam and Buddhism—which have led to founding the World Fellowship of Buddhists and various international

[1] *The Ecumenical Advance. A History of the Ecumenical Movement,* Vol. 2, 1948-1968. Ed. by H. Fey, S.P.C.K., London, 1970, p. 133.

Islamic organisations—the World Muslim Congress, the Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy, and others. However, questions concerning integration in non-Christian religious organisations will not be examined in the present study.

Individual aspects of ecumenism have been reflected in a number of studies by Soviet scholars.[1] Our study will focus on a critical analysis of ecumenical ideology (primarily sociology and theology), its essence and the history of its formation. The influence of ecumenical ideas on confessional theological systems will not be examined here, for they require a special analysis. Special attention is given to the integration of theology and bourgeois ideology within the ecumenical framework, testifying to the deepening crisis in contemporary bourgeois thought, a crisis in bourgeois society's inner life. These questions have not yet been sufficiently studied in Marxist literature on religious questions and need to be researched.

An analysis of ecumenical ideology entails certain

[1] See Ya. Ya. Veish, "Ecumenical Search of the Anglican Church" in *Problems of Scientific Atheism,* Issue 14, Mysl, Moscow, 1973; V. I. Garadzha, *Protestantism,* Mysl, Moscow, 1971; N. S. Gordiyenko, *Present-Day Ecumenism,* Nauka, Moscow, 1972; P. K. Kurochkin, "Russian Orthodox Church and Ecumenism" in *Nauka i religia,* No. 6, 1969; B. Ya. Ramm, "A Catholic Version of Ecumenism" in *The Life of Society and Religion,* Leningrad University Press, Leningrad, 1972; A. N. Chanyshev, *Protestantism,* Nauka, Moscow, 1969; G. S. Yanchenko, "Ecumenism and the Problems of Social Revolution" in *Problems of Scientific Atheism,* Issue 18, 1975; and others (all in Russian).

difficulties. When any given denomination joins the WCC this does not mean total fusion between the two bodies. In attempting to overcome the crisis within the divided churches and to prevent a general religious decline, the ecumenical movement joins together the most varied religious organisations. Ecumenical ideology is contradictory and inconsistent in nature. It rests on a mixture of ideas from bourgeois ideology, theology, and religious sociology, a mixture of confessional and secular idealistic theories aimed at establishing religion as an essential element of the bourgeois way of life. Alongside this, ecumenism also contains within itself reflections of social and political protest in the capitalist and developing countries ("theology of revolution", "theology of liberation", etc.), as well as ideas reflecting the churches' position in the socialist countries (today the WCC has a membership of churches from the capitalist, developing, and socialist countries).

The activity of ecumenical bodies aimed at encouraging international détente, the struggle for peace and the security of all peoples, deserves approval and support, of course, but it is impossible to ignore the ideology's bourgeois apologetic character reflected in many ecumenical publications, documents, and speeches by various supporters of the ecumenical movement.

Historically and in practice, the ecumenical movement was linked with missionary activity, one of the forms of colonial ideological expansion. Missionary groups continue to be, as they always have been,

the most dynamic element in the Catholic and Protestant churches.

The crisis in the imperialist colonial system created difficulties in spreading the Christian faith. As a result, missionaries had to discard their narrowly church-based interests and to overcome religious indifference and competition from other religions through their joint efforts in the difficult struggle for men's "souls".

The rise and functioning of inter-confessional and international missionary-evangelistic societies paved the way for the holding of consultative meetings aimed at elaborating problems of Christian integration at different levels.

The World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 is regarded as the beginning of the 20th-century ecumenical movement. The conference's chairman was John Mott of the United Methodist Church (USA), and his assistant was John Oldham, future Secretary of the International Missionary Council.

Prominent theologians and religious figures such as R. Horton, John Baillie, and William Temple took part in this conference. The Edinburgh Conference ended in the formation of a permanent committee which was to continue working on the solution of missionary tasks. Eleven years later this permanent committee became the International Missionary Council (IMC).[1] This Council was faced

[1] In 1980 the WCC organised and held a jubilee ecumenical conference (devoted to the 70th anniversary of

with the task of researching missionary activity and circulating the results to all missionary branches, as well as coordinating activity by all the national missionary organisations, influencing public opinion to win support for "freedom of religion", freedom of missionary work, and other attributes of the bourgeois way of life.

Originally, the International Missionary Council counted 17 national organisations as its members, 13 of which were "old" European and American churches formed in the 16th-17th centuries. By the 1960s the number of members in the IMC had grown to 38, of which only 14 were "old" churches, and the rest were "Christian councils" (the national missionary councils of Asian, African, and Latin American countries founded in recent times).

However, coordination of the missionary activity of the Protestant confessions is only one element of ecumenism. The Edinburgh Conference (1910) and the subsequent IMC sessions, in which only the missionary bodies of the "old" churches participated, could not resolve all problems. The need arose to elaborate other aspects of Christian unity, too. Above all, questions relating to the theological basis of the future united church, church hierarchy, the organisation and consolidation of the church, and its participation in ideological struggle. They were later elabo-

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the Edinburgh Conference), which summed up the results of missionary activity and defined its future prospects (*One World.* A Monthly Magazine of the WCC, No. 58, 1980).

rated by representatives of the Faith and Order movement, which emerged in the Christian Church in the 1920s.

The Life and Work movement came into being at this same time. It focused attention on questions concerning the Christian churches' attitude to socio-economic and political problems, i.e., questions of "practical" Christianity.

These movements formed the basis for the World Council of Churches.

The leaders of the Faith and Order movement were Anglican Church leaders (Bishop Charles Brent and Archbishop William Temple). They had suggested convening a conference on theological-organisational questions earlier at the Edinburgh Conference. For 17 years discussions and meetings were held, and messages exchanged before the First Faith and Order Conference took place.

At first ecumenical enthusiasts addressed themselves to all the Christian churches, including the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The steps taken by the American Episcopal Church in this respect were typical. A Committee on Unity headed by R. Gardiner was founded on its basis in 1910. In 1914 this committee sent a letter to the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, requesting that he inform Pope Benedict XV of a plan to convene a world Christian doctrinal-organisational conference. In reply the Cardinal informed them of the Pope's sympathy towards the organisers of this conference and reminded them of the Catholic Church's posi-

tion on the question of unity.[1] In 1919 a delegation from the American Protestant churches visited the Vatican, but did not achieve any notable results. After this, the Catholic Church took no official part in the ecumenical organisations. Their stance only changed after the Second Vatican Council.

The Orthodox churches adopted a different position. They tried to move closer—true, at a different time—to Protestant ecumenism.

Representatives of the Orthodox churches attended the Faith and Order preparatory meeting in Geneva headed by Bishop Charles Brent (they had not taken part in the work of the Edinburgh Conference). Bishop Brent also opened the First Faith and Order Conference in Lausanne (1927). Participants in the Lausanne meeting reached some argeement on the spreading of evangelical principles.

The Second Faith and Order Conference took place ten years later—in Edinburgh. In the interim various meetings and consultations had taken place and theological works had been published analysing Protestant and Orthodox dogmas.

An affirmation of Christ as Head of the Church was adopted in Edinburgh, and this served as the basis of the ideological credo later adopted by the First WCC Assembly. "We are one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. We

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[1] *A History of the Ecumenical Movement,* Vol. 1. Ed. by R. Rouse and S. Neill, S.P.C.K., London, 1967, p. 413.

are one in allegiance to Him as Head of the Church, and as King of Kings and Lord of Lords."[1]

However, despite attempts to establish unity on a number of other questions, differences of opinion were disclosed between conference participants. Only after long discussion was agreement reached on the nature of so-called "grace". The role of sacrament and sanctification within the framework of "grace" remained unresolved.

Parallel with the Faith and Order movement, a movement advocating "practical" Christianity arose whose task was to adapt the church's needs to changing socio-economic conditions in capitalist society. As a result of this process the Life and Work movement came into being. Lutheran Archbishop Nathan Söderblom was one of its leaders. Other ecumenical figures (William Temple, for instance) also took part in it.

The activity by members of this movement led to convening a so-called Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm in 1925.

The economic crisis which struck the capitalist countries of Europe and America in the 1930s, the intensification of the class struggle, and the rise of fascism complicated relations between the church and the secular authorities. It was in this atmosphere that the Second Life and Work Conference was held in Oxford in 1937. It was devoted to discussion of

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[1] Norman Goodall, *The Ecumenical Movement*, Oxford University Press, London, 1964, p. 205.

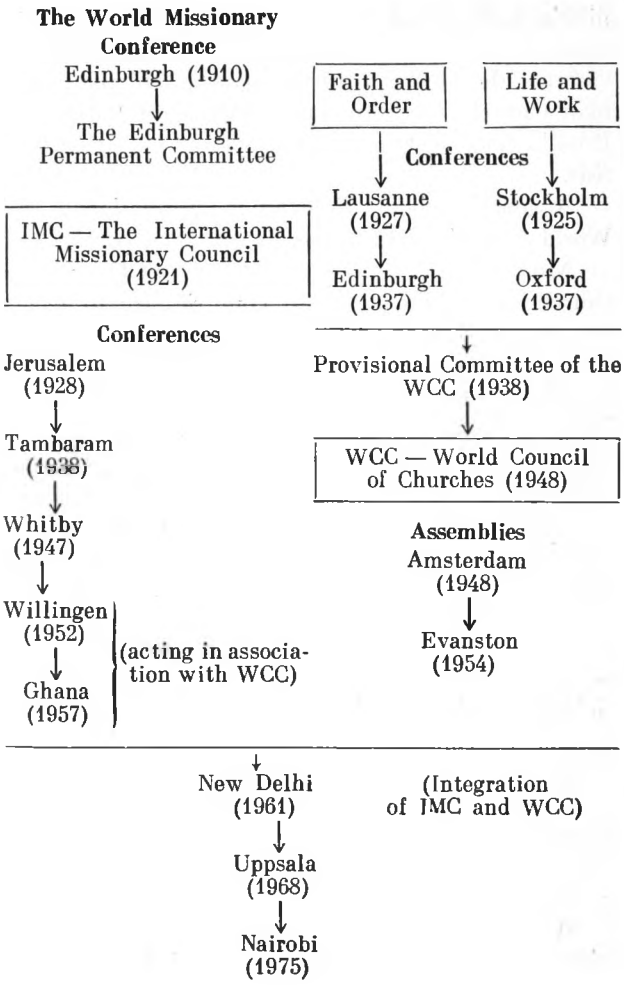
relations between church, society, and state. The deepening religious crisis in the West had a perceptible influence on the conference's resolution.

As mentioned earlier, the Second Faith and Order Conference was held in this same year in Edinburg. The process of unifying both these movements into a single World Council of Churches (WCC) began at this time and was completed in 1948.

Only a preparatory committee was created in 1938. Its Chairman was William Temple and its General Secretary was Dr. Visser't Hooft (who retained his post as WCC General Secretary until 1966).

In 1948 an assembly was held in Amsterdam at which the founding of the World Council of Churches was announced. Its membership included 147 religious organisations. John Mott was elected the WCC's Honorary President. M. Boegner and Archbishop Erling Eidem of Uppsala were made co-Presidents of the WCC. Bishop G.K.A. Bell was elected Chairman of the WCC Central Committee, and Franklin Fry was elected Vice-Chairman. The Second WCC Assembly was held in Evanston (USA) in 1954, and the Third Assembly was held in New Delhi in 1961.

The Fourth Assembly was held in the summer of 1968 in Uppsala (Sweden). WCC membership was significantly expanded at this assembly and the organisation's charter was changed. The Fifth WCC Assembly was held in 1975 in Nairobi (Kenya). In 1979 WCC membership exceeded 290 religious orga-


The World Missionary Conference
Edinburgh (1910)
The Edinburgh Permanent Committee
IMC — The International Missionary Council (1921)
Conferences
Jerusalem (1928)
Tambaram (1938)
Whitby (1947)
Willingen (1952)
Ghana (1957)
(acting in association with WCC)
Faith and Order
Life and Work
Conferences
Lausanne (1927)
Edinburgh (1937)
Stockholm (1925)
Oxford (1937)
Provisional Committee of the WCC (1938)
WCC — World Council of Churches (1948)
Assemblies
Amsterdam (1948)
Evanston (1954)
New Delhi (1961)
Uppsala (1968)
Nairobi (1975)
(Integration of IMC and WCC)

nisations. Six religious organisations from the Soviet Union also became members: the Russian Orthodox Church, the Georgian Orthodox Church, the Armenian Church, the Lutheran Churches of Latvia and Estonia, and the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists.

A genetic scheme showing the formation of the World Council of Churches is given on p. 19.

Most of the representatives of WCC member churches from the capitalist countries try to reconcile the basic contradictions in modern life, contradictions between the two social systems, and to "rise above" capitalism and socialism. In fact, their teaching is a subtle apology for the capitalist system and assists in spreading bourgeois ideas in the developing countries.

The teaching elaborated and spread by pro-Western circles in the World Council of Churches, as well as many other ecumenical ideas and principles are common currency in the ideological struggle today, and they have become a part of bourgeois ideology, as well. Joint research carried out by bourgeois sociologists and theologians within the framework of the ecumenical movement is a typical feature of this trend.

Nonetheless, statements by individual ecumenical figures do provide a realistic appraisal of today's vital problems connected with the peace struggle, democracy, and social justice.

WCC member churches from the socialist countries are loyal to the social system of their own coun-

tries. However, this does not change the unscientific nature of religious ideology.

In order to better understand the history of ecumenical ideology and its place in the class struggle in the modern world it is necessary to analyse the socio-political principles behind Christian integration.

I

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL BASIS OF CHRISTIAN INTEGRATION

The ecumenical movement arose as an instrument by which the Christian churches sought to find a way out of their crises and halt the further decline in religion's prestige. Through the comparative study of the doctrinal differences between the Christian churches, the ecumenists hoped to find a common philosophical source for all of Christianity, to create a basis for cooperation in practical activity and, consequently, for the formation of a single religious community.

The ecumenists' plans, however, exceeded the framework of purely religious activity. Taking as their point of departure the guiding role of religion in social integration, they sought to provide grounds for the WCC to play a dominant role in creating a "global society" under religious control. WCC General Secretary Philip Potter directly links the unity of the church to "the unity of mankind".[1]

Ecumenical sociologists seek to make religion's

[1] Philip Potter, "The Unity of the Church: What Is to Be Done?" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIX, No. 3, WCC, Geneva, 1977, p. 305.

integrative function absolute. They believe that Christian integration should become the basis for the integration of mankind, thus ignoring social and class differences. This is the main reason for the utopian nature of the ecumenists' far-ranging plans.

There have been periods in history when religion acted as an organising, integrating factor. Religion has always fulfilled an integrative function in exploitative society by ideologically sanctifying the society, although at some periods social protest has also taken the from of religious movements. V. I. Lenin pointed out religion's potential organising role, stressing at the same time that "never has the idea of God 'linked the individual with society': it has always *tied* the oppressed *classes hand and foot* with faith in the *divinity* of the oppressors".[1] Lenin thus revealed religion's weakness as an integrative factor. The growing secularisation of social relations and the development of science and humanistic culture act to limit the organising activity of religion in the modern world.

The WCC's activity, which joins together the fundamental types of religious activity typical of other churches, as well, serves as the socio-political basis of Christian integration. The structure of the WCC and the other ecumenical bodies linked to it is determined by the forms and tasks of this activity.

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[1] V. I. Lenin, to Maxim Gorky, November 1913, *Collected Works,* Vol. 35, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 129.

1. STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Born of the crisis in church structures, ecumenism is meant to aid in consolidating efforts aimed at maintaining religion. Within the WCC there remain certain fundamental contradictions (differences between Protestant and Orthodox traditions, differences within the Protestant Church, different approaches towards socio-political problems on the part of church representatives from the capitalist, socialist, and developing countries). There are also Protestant groups which do not take part in the ecumenical movement (certain Lutheran and Baptist organisations, etc.). The majority of the Christian confessions with mystical or eschatological leanings also remain outside the WCC framework. True, as mentioned earlier, contacts between the ecumenical organisations and the Pentecostalists and Seventh Day Adventists have increased of late.

After the final merging of the International Missionary Council (IMC) and the WCC, the latter became the dominant factor in the field of Christian proselytism (conversion to a new faith), which was intended to aid the spread of Christianity in many countries, especially the developing world. Expansion of WCC membership was mainly a result of attracting the Eastern churches to the organisation. By 1963 nearly all the Eastern Orthodox churches had joined the WCC. Expanding contacts with the Eastern churches left its imprint on polemics and the approach to practical and theological questions raised by ecume-

nism. At the same time WCC contacts strengthened with regional ecumenical organisations, as well as with international organisations of various religious tendencies. All this made it possible for WCC leaders in New Delhi to proclaim this an era of "ecumenical mobilisation"[1] and to term their movement "Pan-Christian", which, of course, had little basis in reality. The emergence of the Catholic Church on the ecumenical arena also began to influence the political, as well as the theological and ecclesiastical orientation of the WCC bodies.

The theological problems in ecumenism became more complex.

At first the christological and soteriological (the teaching about Christ's "redemptive" and "salutary" mission) elements of faith were taken as the point of departure for theological-ecclesiastical unity within the WCC. Ecumenical theorists assumed that each WCC member church would, while relying on these elements of faith, express its credo in terms acceptable to its own ecclesiastical tradition. In turn, this theological "basis" would become the guideline for WCC activity.

Later, ecumenists transferred the emphasis in the theological sphere to the trinitarian aspect (the teaching on the active role of the three divine persons

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[1] Dr. Visser't Hooft termed the period after 1948 a period of ecumenical mobilisation for nearly all the Christian churches (*The Ecumenical Advance. A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Vol. 2, *1948-1968*, p. 4).

in the Trinity) and the pneumatological aspect (the teaching on the role of the Holy Spirit) of the Christian doctrine, and supplemented the method of comparative dialogue in the study of the history of Christianity by a search for mutual understanding between theological tendencies within the major confessions.

However, the churches did not come to the sought-after "mutual understanding" in the theological sphere, and the ecumenical bodies were obliged to take up the study of the history and reasons for confessional divisions. Questions relating to unity were discussed at the Faith and Order Commission meetings in Aarhus (1964), Bristol (1967), Louvain (1971), Accra (1974), and Bangalore (1978). The meeting in Aarhus stressed that "the ecumenical movement, while maintaining the autonomy of the churches, yet calls for real commitment in the search for unity".[1]

An attempt was made to elaborate a "universally Christian" point of view through discussing problems in hermeneutics (the interpretation of theological texts) and patrology (the teaching of the "church fathers") and by analysing the significance of the first Christian councils for the ecumenical movement.

Theoretical appraisals of social and political problems today were discussed in the working group for church and society.

A conference on the social significance and the

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[1] *Ecumenical Press Service*, No. 32, 1964, p. 2.

consequences of the technological revolution, as well as the future of man and society was held in Geneva in the summer of 1970. The discussion continued at subsequent ecumenical meetings from 1973 to 1979.

During the preparatory period leading up to the Nairobi Assembly and in the subsequent period the range of problems discussed at ecumenical meetings expanded significantly. For instance, at the 30th Session of the WCC Central Committee (1977) discussion centred on the new international economic order, disarmament, ecology, man, and the role of transnational corporations.

A definite structure for the WCC developed during the 1960s (after the merging of the WCC and the IMC). The fairly complex interdependence between the WCC subdivisions is explained by their history, as well as by the specific conditions and goals of ecumenical associations.

During this period of Christian integration, the WCC was characterised above all by confessional membership ("member churches"; "associated churches" having fewer than 10,000 members; "associated councils"—national councils of Christian churches, and so on). Every WCC participant decided its own organisational-ecclesiastical questions independently. The further consolidation of WCC members was hindered by traditional inter-confessional differences. Elective ecumenical bodies were created which relied, on the one hand, on movements with a long standing (Faith and Order, the missionary movement, and

others) and, on the other hand, on organisations which had only just recently come into being.

The basic WCC subdivisions are the assemblies, the Central Committee, the Executive Committee, the Presidium, the General Secrearíat, plus various divisions, departments, committees, secretariats, and commissions. The WCC's organisational structure and the links between its subdivisions during the 1960s are shown on the scheme on p. 29.

The ecumenical movement is unequally developed in various countries. Some countries have achieved full or partial unity between different confessions. Approximately 40 such unions took place during the period 1910-60. In 1925 as a result of the union between the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregationalist churches in Canada, the United Church of Canada came into being. In 1929 the Church of Scotland joined with the United Free Church of Scotland, and in 1931 all the Methodist churches in England united. The Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists in the USSR brings together believers of various Protestant tendencies (Evangelists, Baptists, some Pentecostalists, and Mennonites). However, these unions have not overcome various fundamental differences arising from their confessional, ethnic, and other traditions—for instance the differences between Baptists, Pentecostalists, and Mennonites in the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists.

Ecumenical relations are most highly developed in the United States, where more than 30 Protestant and Orthodox churches are WCC members. Half of

WCC members:
Churches
Associated Churches
Associated National Councils of Churches
ASSEMBLIES
Central Committee
Executive Committee
General Secretariat
Divisions
Studies
Ecumenical Action
Ecumenical Institute
Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service
World Mission and Evangelism
Departments
Church and Society
Education for Mission and Evangelism
Cooperation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society
The Laity
Youth
Finance and Administration
Information
Commissions
Faith and Order
of the Churches on International Affairs
World Mission and Evangelism
SECRETARIATS
Race Relations
Religious Liberty
Faith and Order
COMMITTEES
Specialised Assistance to Social Projects
Structure
The Church and the Jewish People

all printed ecumenical materials are distributed in the United States. The American churches' financial contributions to the WCC are also large. Financial contributions by the West German churches have also increased lately, however, as ecumenical leaders have pointed out.

American theologians claim that their churches play a special role in the ecumenical movement. "The most creative contribution of the American churches to the formation of the World Council was neither their financial support nor their personnel, but their experience with the conciliar pattern of relationships."[1]

Describing religious life in the United States, bourgeois specialists on religion note the growing interest in ecumenical problems and Christian unity. They attribute this to ecumenical propaganda and the growth of a conviction that church divisions contradict the basic tenets of Christian teaching. They also note the growing influence of ecumenical ideas on prominent religious figures and on many religious organisations. The Gallup Public Opinion Poll has also shown a growth in ecumenical influence. The survey inquired into attitudes towards the joining of all American Protestant communities into one church. Participants were asked whether they would approve such a union or not. Members of the various Protestant confessions answered thus:

[1] Samuel M. Cavert, *The American Churches in the Ecumenical Movement, 1900-1968,* Association Press, New York, 1968, p. 202.

	1930s	1940s (in per cent)	1950s
Approve	40	42	50
Disapprove	51	47	39
No opinion	9	11	11

In the 1950s believers were asked: what would be the attitude of their own church on the question of forming a single Protestant Church in America, and they answered in the following way:

Church would favour	28 per cent
Church would not favour	45 per cent
No opinion	27 per cent[1]

American religious life is also marked by the expansion of inter-confessional ties "without doctrinal changes" (bourgeois religious experts include in this category the presence of Catholic observers at Protestant ecumenical meetings and the presence of Protestant representatives at Catholic meetings, inter-confessional consultations, etc.). Noteworthy in this respect is the Consultation on Church Union in which Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and other confessions took part. Participants in the consultation regard their work as a basic element in the search for "the way to a united church, catholic, evangelical and reformed".[2]

[1] *A Guide to the Religions of America.* Ed. by Leo Rosten, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1955, p. 244.

[2] *Consultation on Church Union,* Forward Movement Publications, Cincinnati, 1967, p. 5.

The range of questions discussed at such consultations is fairly broad. These include membership in the future united church, the relationship between various confessional traditions and "writings", and liturgical questions.

Ecumenists are striving to expand their sphere of influence and to attract the attention of various religious organisations and believers at all levels. A corresponding concept of "varied participation" has been elaborated: "Every church member has a role and a responsibility to cultivate the sense of urgency for Christians to live together as the family of God. Every local church should serve this purpose in its community."[1]

At the same time, ecumenists are trying to overcome the difficulties that have arisen in the movement for Christian unity. A tendency has developed in religious circles to see Christian unity as a fusion of different beliefs and rites ("religious syncretism"). To counterbalance this idea, ecumenists have advanced the idea of "Christian pluralism", which allows for the existence of different Christian tendencies and organisations.

The movement for Christian unity has also come up against obstacles in the relations between the American confessions and the corresponding religious organisations in the formerly dependent and semi-

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[1] Roswell P. Barnes, "The Prospects for the Ecumenical Movement in the USA" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XVI, No. 5, 1964, p. 503.

dependent countries. The latter often link activity by American religious organisations to neo-colonial policy. As a result, American religious circles are concerned about the prospects for missionary activity. Roswell P. Barnes, an American ecumenical leader, expressed this concern in the following way: "The role of the rich uncle is a most difficult one.... The prospects for the ecumenical movement in the USA indicate the probability of misunderstanding and tension between bilateral relations of American churches and the churches they assist in other countries...."[1]

In Barnes' opinion, among the sources from which the ecumenical movement draws its strength the most important are the tendencies within ecumenism. Another source is the drawing of new confessions into the ecumenical movement. But difficulties also arise here. As mentioned earlier, many major Protestant organisations in the United States are not part of the ecumenical movement.

A similar variety of attitudes towards ecumenism exists among the Protestant churches of England. Yet many confessions which form a part of the British Council of Churches nonetheless have established deadlines for their union by stages.

The future of the ecumenical movement depends to a great extent on integration at the local level.

The ecumenical press contains mention of various

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[1] Ibid., p. 507.

instances of integration at the local parish level,[1] but a large-scale process of fusion between various religious groups is hardly likely or possible at present.

WCC leaders are striving to activate this process by urging the faithful to take part in various forms of ecumenical actions and to diffuse ecumenical information. Ecumenical leaders are therefore lending great importance to the combination of various forms of religious activity. The changes taking place in this respect are also having a reciprocal effect on the WCC structure.

In the 1970s the WCC's structure underwent major changes. Fundamental organisational alterations were approved at meetings of the WCC Central Committee in Addis Ababa in 1971. A plan aimed at integrating the WCC and the World Council of Christian Education (an international religious organisation which coordinates the study and spread of Christian teaching) was adopted at this time.

The reasons for these changes in WCC activity and structure were the factors we mentioned earlier: social changes which had taken place in the world, expanding WCC membership as a result of new member churches in the developing and socialist countries, and increasing contacts with the Catholic Church and churches not affiliated to the WCC. In addition, WCC activity has been influenced by relations between church leaders and the laity and by

[1] *The Ecumenical Advance. A History of the Ecumenical Movement,* Vol. 2, *1948-1968,* p. 24.

general questions concerning the church's position in the world today. Changes in social and economic life and in church life itself have forced ecumenists to seek new forms of activity while maintaining continuity in inter-church relations.

The geographical expansion of Christian integration has heightened the importance of relations between the WCC and national ecumenical organisations. The structure of the ecumenical organs had to adapt to the growing influence of the ecumenical organisations in various regions of the world.

Another aspect of the question concerns the financing of the various ecumenical programmes and services. Contributions made by the various member churches to the WCC central funds have not been stable by any means. Yet it is those forms of religious activity which tend to expand which need most active financing. The financial crisis which overcame the WCC was another of the causes for the re-examination of the existing systems of inter-confessional links.

Finally, the general crisis in religion, internal church differences of opinion in the interpretations of theological, moral, and organisational problems, and the growth of "unofficial" religious movements opposed to "organisational ecumenism"[1] made it necessary for the WCC leadership to carry out certain structural changes within the organisation.

The materials from one WCC Central Committee

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[1] Visser't Hooft has pointed out that many young people's religious organisations oppose official ecumenism.

session noted that this new structure "should highlight the function for which the World Council was constituted".[1]

It is planned to increase the role of the regular bodies in directing the ecumenical programmes, linking the programmes together, and elaborating a special administrative methodology.

This methodology will be taken from recommendations by Western sociologists: joining the needs of the individual to the over-all goals of the organisation; a rational balance between power and authority; "creation, rather than the overcoming of tension", which is meant to heighten the productivity of the administrative apparatus, create a source of self-renewal, and so on. Attributing vital importance to these recommendations, the movements' leaders believe that the difficulties which have arisen as a result of restructuring the ecumenical organisations will be overcome and will even aid the speedy resolution of problems in Christian integration.

Thus, in trying to expand its activity and overcome the deepening crisis in church structures, the WCC leadership is also altering its own structure.

WCC divisions have been replaced by so-called "programme units". Within the framework of the three basic programme units, which are "manifestations of *unity and renewal*; *faith and witness*;

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[1] *Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Minutes and Reports of the Twenty-Fourth Meeting, Addis Ababa*, Geneva, 1971, p. 158.

justice and service; *education and communication*",[1] various WCC functions are carried out with the help of the subdivisions which should become, according to the ecumenists' plans, more "elastic" than they were previously. These subdivisions are not constant, but are changeable and interlinked units enjoying relative autonomy.

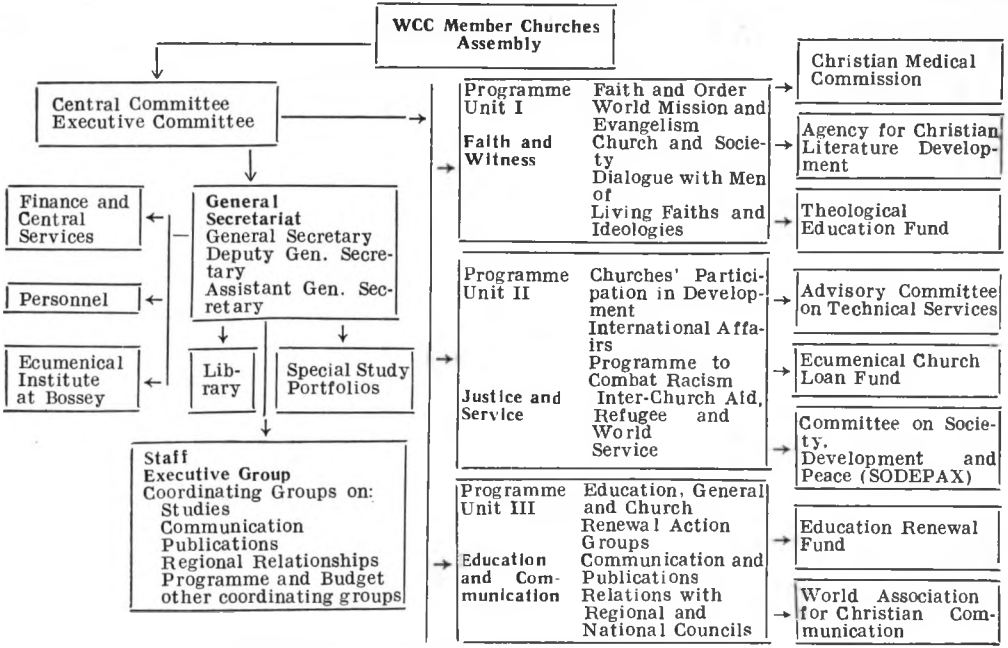
The work of these subdivisions is coordinated by various bodies (the Central Committee, the General Secretariat, etc.). WCC structure in the 1970s is shown in the diagram on the next page.

It can be assumed that in the future, WCC structure will alter in accordance with the needs of its activity in the developed capitalist countries, the tasks of spreading Christianity in the developing countries, and attempts to maintain its influence in the socialist countries.

The WCC is trying to integrate all forms of religious activity and all means of religious influence. The basic types of such activity include the following: (1) international social and political activity; (2) missionary activity; (3) activity in various types of lay organisations, and (4) charity work. Various divisions and departments, followed by programme units, commissions, and working groups, have been created within the WCC to coordinate all this activity.

The WCC's basic activities are closely interrelated. For instance, charity work and WCC activity in various

[1] Ibid., p. 160.


WCC Member Churches
Assembly
Central Committee
Executive Committee
Finance and Central Services
General Secretariat
General Secretary
Deputy Gen. Secretary
Assistant Gen. Secretary
Personnel
Ecumenical Institute at Bossey
Library
Special Study Portfolios
Staff
Executive Group
Coordinating Groups on:
Studies
Communication
Publications
Regional Relationships
Programme and Budget
other coordinating groups
Programme Unit I
Faith and Witness
Faith and Order
World Mission and Evangelism
Church and Society
Dialogue with Men of Living Faiths and Ideologies
Programme Unit II
Justice and Service
Churches' Participation in Development
International Affairs
Programme to Combat Racism
Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service
Programme Unit III
Education and Communication
Education, General and Church Renewal Action Groups
Communication and Publications
Relations with Regional and National Councils
Christian Medical Commission
Agency for Christian Literature Development
Theological Education Fund
Advisory Committee on Technical Services
Ecumenical Church Loan Fund
Committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX)
Education Renewal Fund
World Association for Christian Communication

secular organisations are often elements of missionary work. Nonetheless, they are carried out by special ecumenical services. The basic types of ecumenical activity will be examined further on in greater detail.

WCC bodies devote serious attention to international activity aimed at maintaining and spreading religion throughout the world.

2. EVOLUTION OF THE WCC's SOCIO-POLITICAL ORIENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

Several stages can be seen in the WCC's political history.

The first stage (1948-late 1950), when WCC organisational structures were taking shape, was characterised by a one-sided, pro-Western social and political orientation, descriptive ecclesiology (the theological teaching about the church), and speculative theology. Founded by West European and American religious and lay figures during the early "cold war" period, the WCC acted as a spokesman for imperialist policies. It was significant that John Foster Dulles had a hand in creating the ecumenical organisations. The most important events during this period were the WCC assemblies (First—Amsterdam, 1948; Second—Evanston, 1954), and the Lund Conference on Faith and Order in 1952.

WCC activity underwent a change in direction in its second stage in the 1960s under the influence of the widespread peace movement and the growing

struggle for national liberation, which led to the emergence of dozens of young Asian and African states. It was during this period that religious organisations from the developing countries and the socialist countries joined the WCC, and this also influenced the organisation's political line. Fearing social and political isolation, the WCC leadership was forced to take a more realistic position on international questions. The conferences held within the WCC framework ceased to be anti-communist forums, although traces remain to the present day. The conferences began to adopt resolutions on the need for international détente, universal disarmament, a just and equitable approach to social problems, international dialogue, and so forth. The most realistic resolutions in this direction were adopted at the World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva (1966). A Third WCC Assembly was convened in New Delhi (1961) and a Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order was held in Montreal in 1963.

Naturally, the strengthening of this tendency did not suit the conservative wing of the WCC. As a result, during the organisation's third period (1960s-1970s) there were attempts to push its political orientation to the right. At a WCC Central Committee meeting in Iráklion (1967), the concept of a "transcendental" church was announced, a concept meant to separate the church from acute social problems. A tense struggle about the church's relationship with the modern world flared up at the Fourth WCC Assembly in Uppsala (July 1968). The result was the

adoption of a realistic resolution condemning imperialist aggression in Vietnam. Despite the reactionary circles, the Assembly also adopted a resolution condemning Israeli aggression in the Middle East. Resolutions on other major problems (attitude to colonialism, for one) were ambiguous. Later, the WCC bodies took a positive stance on the conclusion of peace in Vietnam.

Discussion of contemporary problems also took place at the WCC Fifth Assembly (Nairobi, November-December 1975), where views were aired on the results of the European Conference on Security and Cooperation (Helsinki, 1975), universal disarmament, South African intervention in Angola, the anti-racist struggle, human rights violations in Latin America, etc. Important, positive resolutions were adopted on all these questions.

Nonetheless, attempts continued to create an anti-Communist and anti-Soviet atmosphere at the assembly. In particular, reactionary religious activists from a number of Western countries, urged on by imperialist circles, sought to blow up the human rights' issue. Special emphasis was placed on supposed violations of the right to freedom of conscience in the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union. Falsified and tendentiously selected materials were used in this discussion. The delegations from the socialist countries condemned these insinuations.

These changes in the political orientation of the WCC and that of WCC-related organisations also influenced the ecumenical interpretation of Christian

social principles. Social concepts are closely linked to ethical principles in Christianity. Those who favour Christian integration seek to draw up a unified social programme, a so-called ecumenical "social ethic" which, beneath a mask of abstract humanism, advances the idea of "class peace".

During the early period of the ecumenical movement, the social views of its ideologues were shaped by the writings of Protestant theologians—Adolf von Harnack, Ernst Troeltsch, and in particular, members of the "social Gospel" group, one form of liberal bourgeois ideology. A reply of sorts to the ideas of the "social Gospel" group can be seen in the resolutions passed by the Stockholm Ecumenical Conference on "practical Christianity" in 1925, which affirmed the need to adapt biblical teachings to the specific needs of modern life. They stated that, in keeping with the Gospel, production should not be based on the concept of pure profit alone, but should serve society. Private property should be controlled, but an account rendered only to God. Striving to reconcile the conflict between labour and capital, participants in the ecumenical conference proclaimed that "co-operation between capital and labour should take place of conflict, so that employers and employed alike may be enabled to regard their part in industry as the fulfilment of a vocation. Thus alone can we obey our Lord's command. . . ."[1]

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[1] *Documents on Christian Unity*. Ed. by G. K. A. Bell, Oxford University Press, London, 1955, p. 268.

The subsequent economic depression in the Western capitalist countries, the spread of fascism, and the intensifying class struggle strengthened the churches' interest in socio-economic problems, the state, and related matters. These questions were discussed at the Oxford Conference in 1937. Three approaches towards the given problems could be observed at the conference. The first was the traditional approach: Christian social ethics founded on New Testament principles. The second approach was to oppose the personal ethic of salvation to concrete social Christian programmes. Those who favoured the third approach sought to overcome the extremes represented by the first two approaches. They stressed the negative aspects of modern capitalist society, focused attention on the need to increase the church's influence on the family, school, and other social institutions, and sought to protect Christianity from pure individualism. The last point of view was shared by most of the ecumenists and formed the basis for discussion of social questions at the first WCC assemblies.

As a result of the emergence of the socialist system, all the churches had to define their attitude towards it. Stating their adherence to political neutralism and impartiality towards the interests of two opposing social systems, ecumenical circles spoke out in favour of a society based on "a mixed economy", i.e., a combination of the planned economy and private enterprise. One of the WCC founders John Oldham, advanced the idea of "a responsible society", one founded on a unified social and religious basis.

However, these concepts were not adopted by all the participants in the ecumenical discussion. For instance, those who shared the views of the prominent Protestant theologian Karl Barth, believed that these ideas did not have a sufficiently "biblical basis". On the other hand, a group of younger theologians reproached the ecumenists with their one-sided, pro-Western attitude and with ignoring the interests of the peoples in the dependent and semi-dependent countries.

The swift decolonisation process and growth in the national liberation movement led to the emergence of young national states. The new WCC membership of the churches from the developing countries had a perceptible influence on the organisation's interpretation of certain social problems. The director of the WCC's "Church and Society" programme, Paul Abrecht, asserted that "the Church must be concerned about rapid social change because the Gospel is for the world, including the world of changing human affairs".[1]

Social change, coupled with the technological revolution, has also made ecumenists re-examine their social and ethical principles, which they earlier interpreted in terms of speculative theology. This was made clear at the ecumenical conferences held in Geneva (1966 and 1970), in Bucharest (1974), and the Uppsala WCC Assembly (1968), where the centre of

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[1] Paul Abrecht, *The Churches and Rapid Social Change,* Doubleday & Co. Inc., New York, 1961, p. 49.

discussion was man's place in an age of technology, social revolutions, and international socio-political activity. These questions were also discussed at the WCC Assembly in Nairobi (1975).

Western specialists on social forecasting have predicted a rise in interest by the leading Western powers in the activity of various international organisations in the next few years. As a result, we can expect increasing pressure by the ruling circles in these countries on WCC actions. At the same time, the WCC and its special body—the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA)—are striving to extend their influence on international politics and international social activity.

This commission was established in 1946 under the aegis of the International Missionary Council and the Provisional Committee of the WCC (the CCIA is now a part of the WCC Programme Unit II). More than any other ecumenical organisation, the CCIA is occupied with fundamental consideration of the relation between religion and politics, as well as providing it with a theological grounding. Prominent Protestant figures, as well as such representatives of "dialectical theology" as Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr, took a leading part in organising the commission and working out its ideological credo.

A special WCC conference on disarmament (1978) affirmed that it was necessary to elaborate a "theology of peace" both "eschatological" and "prophetic" in nature, and to examine all the burning issues of today through its prism.

The church's political activity is examined in a similar vein. Norman Goodall, a leading WCC theorist, writes that the ecumenical organisations do not occupy themselves with politics in the sense that secular political organisations do. The ecumenical organisations recognise no national borders. Christ's realm "transcends this world and his kingdom must never be equated with any temporal order; yet his Word has meaning for history and for time and it is part of the mission of the Church to seek to articulate the Word in terms which can be translated into political action".[1]

However, as we pointed out above, the role played by the ecumenical organisations and their leaders in international affairs shows that they are far less abstractly "impartial in a Christian spirit" than vitally interested in the outcome of the struggle between the major socio-political forces of our day.

The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs strives to exert an influence on the UN, UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation, and the World Health Organisation through its various memorandums and declarations on Christian political principles. At the UN alone, more than a hundred questions affecting the most burning political issues of the day are discussed yearly at its sessions and various committee meetings. These questions include peace and international security, human rights, strategies for international economic and so-

[1] Norman Goodall, Op. cit., p. 91.

cial development, and the resolution of given conflicts. Representatives of the CCIA and other ecumenical bodies also express their views on many of these matters.

The participation of the democratic segments of believers in the peace struggle has influenced the resolutions adopted at various ecumenical conferences and consultations. Ecumenical leaders were forced to adopt realistic positions on many international problems of the day. In recent years, for instance, the WCC and CCIA have repeatedly stressed their opposition to war as a means of resolving international conflicts, and have expressed their conviction that the elimination of nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare is the basic requirement for man's survival.

A CCIA memorandum welcomed the agreement forbidding the testing of nuclear weapons in the three spheres, the peaceful use of atomic energy, the agreement on the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and the peaceful use of the sea and ocean bed.[1]

A WCC representative took part in preparations for and the work of the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow in 1973.

A significant contribution to expanding participation by believers in the movement for a more stable peace and international cooperation was made by the

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[1] *Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches,* WCC, New York, 1969 (further—*CCIA of the WCC*).

World Conference "Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations Among Nations" (Moscow 1977). Representatives of the ecumenical organisations (WCC, All Africa Conference of Churches, Conference of European Churches) also took part in this conference. The conference welcomed international détente as a necessary requirement for peace and justice throughout the world and appealed for détente to be extended to all areas of the world. Participants in the conference gave their support to an initiative to convene a world conference on disarmament in which all states would participate—large and small, those with nuclear weapons and those without. The conference issued an appeal to religious leaders and the faithful to influence public opinion in favour of general and complete disarmament.[1]

At the same time, as was announced in the Soviet press, the National Council of the Churches of Christ (the most influential religious organisation in the United States) appealed to the American Congress and government not to build the neutron bomb, to ban the funding of its development, and to put an end to the production of nuclear weapons in general.[2]

In 1978 a special session of the UN General Assembly on disarmament was held at which repre-

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[1] See *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 7, 1977, p. 2 (in Russian).

[2] See *Pravda*, November 13, 1977.

sentatives of world opinion delivered appeals for concrete measures to halt the arms race. WCC General Secretary Philip Potter also addressed the session.

The 1968 WCC Assembly in Uppsala adopted a resolution on "The International Protection of Human Rights". The ecumenical bodies condemned South African apartheid. At a 1968 meeting the CCIA had observed that racial discrimination is contrary to Christian beliefs. Apartheid was again condemned at the WCC's Fifth Assembly in Nairobi in 1975. For the most part, however, ecumenists were disturbed by the fact that apartheid hinders the church's missionary activity.

Ecumenical leaders speak a great deal about the part they played in working out the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN in 1948. The elaboration of this declaration and the inclusion in it of articles about civil and political rights was accompanied by a tense struggle. This struggle ended in victory for the progressive forces, as a result of which the declaration became the first international document to fully establish man's economic and social rights. The declaration also stated the right to profess religious belief.

Ecumenists made use of the international conference held in 1968 in Teheran devoted to the International Year for Human Rights (in honour of the 20th anniversary of the Declaration) to increase its influence. The CCIA sent its representative to this conference and approved its resolutions.

It should be mentioned that while the new Soviet Constitution was being discussed, before its adoption, attacks by enemies of the Soviet Union "in defence of the rights" of Soviet believers, who are supposedly persecuted for their beliefs, became more frequent in the West. The untruthfulness of this slanderous campaign, which was intended to compromise real socialism in public opinion, especially among religious believers, was shown at the World Conference "Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations Among Nations" held in Moscow in 1977.

One more fact should be mentioned. In the late 1960s research was carried out under UN sponsorship on the prospects for mankind's social development (in particular, for the 1970s). On the basis of this research the UN prepared a report on the world's social situation and progress. It discussed basic demographic tendencies, progress in health care, education, and social security, as well as unemployment and regional difficulties in social development. A corresponding declaration on social progress and development was adopted at a session of the UN General Assembly after bitter ideological struggle.

The CCIA and the other ecumenical organisations followed these discussions and frequently issued statements interpreting them in terms of abstract Christian humanism. It was observed at CCIA meetings that a strategy for international development should take into account human resources as the most fundamental, vital capital. A report at the Uppsala

Assembly stated clearly that man is the most important criteria for development.[1]

The ecumenical bodies also state their position on certain individual problems, in particular on the funding of economic development. Several ecumenical documents encourage private investment in the developing countries and other such measures. True, while the ecumenists point out the increase in official loans, state subsidies, and private investment in the developing countries, they also note with regret the growing foreign debt of these countries.

Investments are increasingly being made by the transnational corporations. These gigantic monopolies' growth and expansion is a new phenomenon in international political and economic relations.

The role played by the transnationals in international relations was widely discussed in ecumenical circles, especially after the WCC's Nairobi Assembly. Various opinions, reflecting the socio-political differentiation within ecumenism, were expressed during these discussions. Alongside criticism of the negative consequences of the transnationals' activity, there was also support for these organisations' supposedly positive role and appeals to establish a "just dialogue" with them.

The WCC maintains relations with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and other international organisations.

The ecumenical organisations generally support

[1] *CCIA of the WCC,* 1969.

UN actions on international crises. For instance, they discussed the granting of independence to Namibia (South-West Africa). Ecumenical leaders publicly condemned the racist regime in Rhodesia.[1]

We can conclude then that Christian integration helps to some extent to draw various groups of believers into the movement for peace and social justice, and contributes to improving the international climate and international détente. With the active participation of the churches from the socialist countries, the WCC Fifth Assembly approved the Helsinki Final Act and appealed to the governments of all countries to carry its provisions into practice. The vital significance of this Act was affirmed by a colloquium in Montreux (Switzerland) in 1977 and at other church conferences convened at the WCC's initiative.[2]

However, purely religious goals are also pursued. By their theoretical and practical work the pro-Western circles in the WCC help to strengthen private property relations and the bourgeois way of life. In their appraisal of the contradictions in modern life and formulation of WCC external policy tasks, many of the organisation's leaders rely on bourgeois sociological concepts, thereby obscuring the class nature of modern social problems.

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[1] *Ecumenical Press Service,* No. 42, 1965; *CCIA of the WCC,* 1975.

[2] *Europe after Helsinki and the Developing Regions, Spiritual, Moral and Practical Responsibilities of Our Churches,* WCC, Geneva, 1977, p. 5.

On the whole, the socio-political activity carried on by WCC bodies stimulates research into sociological and theological problems in the ecumenical movement (social change, ecology, social forecasting, etc.). At the same time this activity is closely linked to missionary activity.

3. INTEGRATION OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AND NEOCOLONIALISM

One symptom of the crisis in capitalism is the collapse of the colonial system, a result of the shift in the relation of world forces—the socialist countries' transformation into a decisive factor in world development, the enhanced influence of the international communist and workers' movement, and the struggle for national independence. Nonetheless, imperialism tries to subordinate and exploit the former dependent and semi-dependent countries through a neocolonialist policy. By various socio-economic means, and political and ideological influence, imperialism seeks to re-establish its sway in the economically dependent, developing countries. One of neocolonialism's weapons in this struggle is the Christian Church, especially its missionary organisations.

As mentioned before, as a consequence of the general religious crisis, individual churches have recently encountered difficulties in spreading their views. This is the source of their need to join forces in the missionary sphere.

Research into the theoretical basis of "practical

Christianity" and of the ecumenical missionary movement is in turn linked with attempts to integrate the Christian churches' missionary activity. The ecumenical bodies, now a part of the WCC's Programme Unit I, "Faith and Witness", coordinated this activity.

When the WCC and IMC merged into one organisation, the development of evangelist methods and the study of the missionary structure of religious communities expanded (Department of Education for Mission and Evangelism). Two different approaches to the solution of these questions emerged on the part of the North American and West European churches. West European ecumenists adhered to a traditionally theological approach, while North American ecumenical representatives sought to solve their problems by adapting to the current social situation.

Ecumenists lend great importance to the study of primary religious communities. Disagreement continues over the relationship between local religious communities and their secular surroundings. This is a vital problem for all the Christian churches. Increased teaching of the Bible is also discussed. This is given great importance in the ecumenical movement's missionary strategy.

Christian "conversion" is part of the activity of the WCC Secretariat on Religious Liberty. The Secretariat's work was given additional energy by the Second Vatican Council's discussion of religious freedom. WCC representatives commented on the Vatican's discussion of this question and, after the Council's publication of its "Declaration on Religious

Liberty", the WCC published a series of articles expounding and interpreting the declaration. Dr. Carillo de Albornoz, Secretary of the WCC Secretariat on Religious Liberty, stated that although the declaration contained individual "anti-ecumenical statements", on the whole it was acceptable to the WCC. "This new Christian unanimity, at least in the most fundamental points of religious freedom, opens worldwide ecumenical perspective and will make ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church much easier."[1]

The WCC Division of World Mission and Evangelism (in the 1970s the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism) concerned itself with the practical side of evangelism and missionary training. This division and the commission began to carry out the functions of the IMC, which had joined the WCC at the assembly in New Delhi. At this new stage of their activity, the missionary organisations restructured themselves and their inter-relations in accordance with the concept of "the mission on six continents". It envisages increasing missionary activity throughout the world and the broad spread of religion in the socialist and developing countries. WCC bodies maintain contacts with local and confessional missionary councils, as well as with various types of regional ecumenical organisations. It is the IMC and later the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) that were most interested in

[1] *Ecumenical Press Service,* No. 44, 1965, p. 6.

founding and developing these councils. Representatives of the CWME used to get ahead of others to new areas to establish ecumenical missionary centres there. The East Asia Christian Conference (1954) and the All Africa Conference of Churches emerged as a result of the efforts of the missionary organisations.

The ecumenists had to share the sphere of missionary activity with the Catholics. In April 1965 a consultation was held between the WCC and Vatican representatives on missionary matters. WCC representatives later said that the results of this consultation influenced the Vatican Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity.

With the same goals in mind, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism established contacts with other religious organisations outside the WCC. The CWME carries out many of its programmes jointly with various subdivisions of the WCC.

Missionary activity was more fully discussed at the conference held by the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in Mexico (December 1963). Representatives of the Orthodox Church, as well as two Catholic observers, took part in such a conference for the first time.

The conference participants condemned the divided church: "A divided Church is not only a scandal: it can become responsible for the death of men's souls". Problems in uniting the church were consequently examined. A major role in this process was assigned to missionary activity: "Let us

grasp the meaning of the whole world as having been reconciled. Christians must be much bolder in claiming all things for God."[1]

Social changes and the growing influence of atheist ideas have produced a corresponding change in the missionary organisations' structure and the approach to missionary problems. While acknowledging this, ecumenists nonetheless associate the need for such changes with the concept of "divine providence" in the world and the church's "divine essence". "We affirm that this world is God's world. The very turbulence of contemporary life is a product of men's response, either in obedience or disobedience, to the living God. Men may not know this. They may ignore it. But the fact remains that God is Lord not only of creation but also of history.... We are called to a sustained effort to understand the secular world and to discern the will of God in it," declared the Message to the conference.[2]

Ecumenical missionaries regard development of dialogue as a major means of overcoming the friction which arises when meeting ideological partners-competitors. Its equal nature is guaranteed, in their view, by the recognition of the Christological aspect of faith. This aspect also determines the orientation of missionary activity: "God's redemptive mission culminates in the coming of Christ, the true man, the head of the new humanity.... The dominant concern of the missionary congregation must therefore be

[1] *Ecumenical Press Service*, No. 1, 1964, p. 4.
[2] Ibid., p. 11.

to point the humanity in Christ as the goal of mission."[1]

Taking into account the intensification of the struggle for national liberation, the delegates to the Mexico Conference observed that missionary work should find its place in the struggle for social justice: "... The Christian congregation must recognize that God sends it into the secular world. Christians must take their part in it—in office, factory, school, and farm, and in the struggle for peace and a just order in social and racial relationships."[2]

At the New Delhi Assembly ecumenists produced a programme for joint action in the mission. They considered the most effective actions within the framework of this programme to be joint activity by various religious organisations in the "urban" and "industrial" missions. Pan-African missionary consultations were held in Kenya and Uganda on the subject of the break-down in traditional agrarian societies and the rapid growth of cities on the African continent. At these conferences ways were worked out to train local missionary workers.

The ecumenical missionary organisations regard their work in aiding the sick as extremely important, and they seek to associate the healing of physical ills with Christian "conversion" and "salvation". A consultation was held in Tübingen in 1964 on this subject, and a special programme on "the healing

[1] *The Church for Others and the Church for the World,* WCC, Geneva, 1967, pp. 77-78.

[2] *Ecumenical Press Service,* No. 1, 1964, p. 12.

function" was elaborated, as well as the formulation of a religious-ethical conception of human health: "Health, in the Christian understanding, is a continuous and victorious encounter with the powers that deny the existence and goodness of God."[1]

The Tübingen Consultation recommended founding special "healing groups" as an experiment. They were to include a physician, a nurse, a psychiatrist, and a pastoral counsellor, all of whom were to seek "to treat the patient in the totality of his sickness".[2]

A special Christian medical commission was instituted at the WCC Central Committee sessions in Iráklion in 1967 for the purpose of coordinating the churches' "healing" work, as well as for maintaining contacts with lay health organisations and the corresponding UN institutions.[3]

The ecumenical organisations make use of not only doctors, but also people of other professions for their missionary purposes. For instance, within the framework of the Laymen Abroad Service, the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism tries to make use of specialists travelling abroad in order to spread religious ideas, regardless of their confessional association (so-called non-professional missionaries).

Realising the growing influence of the mass media on public opinion, the WCC Commission on

[1] *The Healing Church,* WCC, Geneva, 1965, p. 35.
[2] *Ecumenical Press Service,* No. 21, 1964, p. 14.
[3] *Report on the Activities and Concerns of the Christian Medical Commission,* WCC, Geneva, 1978, pp. 6-11.

World Mission and Evangelism works together with the World Association of Christian Broadcasting. The Commission also draws on various international agencies for missionary purposes: World Christian Books, the Christian Literature Fund, and the Theological Education Fund, all of which it supports financially.

Relations between the ecumenists and non-Christian religious organisations and believers are also conditioned by missionary goals.

For instance, the WCC Committee on the Church and the Jewish People conducted various consultations between Christian and Judaic theologians. Attempts were made to create an ecumenical centre in Israel, despite that country's aggressive imperialist policies, which have been condemned by world opinion.

Ecumenists are disturbed by conflicts in the missionary sphere with Islamic representatives. A special missionary project entitled Islam in Africa was drawn up in 1959. A centre for the study of Islamic dogmas, the Koran, and religious postulates open to debate in Christian-Moslem relations was opened in Ibadan in 1964.

Recent ecumenical documents have examined certain aspects of the liberation movement in countries which are fundamentally Islamic. Ecumenists believe that the movement in the "Islamic world" is capable of creating "new tensions and possibilities in international relations" in the 1980s.[1]

[1] "Into the 1980s: Some Ecumenical Views on the Challenge of Values and Structures" in *Ecumenism and a*

The growth in the national liberation movement, the increasing influence of Marxism-Leninism, technological progress, and the heightening competition offered by other religions and lay organisations have forced ecumenists to re-examine the methodological principles of missionary ideology and activity. These questions were discussed at the World Missionary Assembly in Bangkok (December 1972-January 1973). The assembly's theme was "Salvation Today".[1]

As Philip Potter, WCC General Secretary and former Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, remarked, missionary activity today includes dialogue with representatives of "living faiths and ideologies", the participation of the broad masses, and "all of God's people" and the organisation of joint actions in the mission. These methodological principles make it possible, in Dr. Potter's opinion, to link missionary work to the solution of social tasks, to "the liberation of persons and societies from all that prevents them from living an authentic existence in justice and a shared community, and with openness to others and to God's future".[2]

These principles were further developed in the materials of the jubilee ecumenical conference in Mel-

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New World Order: the Failure of the 1970s and the Challenges of the 1980s, WCC, Geneva, 1980, pp. 61-62.

[1] *International Review of Mission,* Vol. LXVII, No. 267, 1978, pp. 365-70.

[2] Philip Potter, "Christ's Mission and Ours in Today's World" in *International Review of Mission,* Vol. LXII, No. 246, 1973, p. 157.

bourne (May 1980), at which the methodological problems of missionary work were examined within the framework of messianic concepts. Current topics of interest (the churches' relation to socio-political and cultural-ideological structures, to socio-economic change, to the situation in the developing countries, and other matters) were included in the theological context of the discussion analysing the coming of the "Kingdom of God".[1]

The integration of missionary activity was aimed at reconciling the basic contradictions in modern life and providing an ideological basis for the bourgeois way of life. In addition, as they adapt themselves to changing social circumstances, the ecumenical bodies try to include problems in missionary integration within the framework of the liberation movement.

In order to maintain the religious beliefs of the population in the capitalist countries and to spread Christianity in the developing countries, ecumenists try to differentiate missionary activity and to tie it in with other forms of religious influence.

4. DIFFERENTIATION OF ECUMENICAL ACTIVITY

Striving to achieve maximum efficiency in their missionary work, ecumenists try to join religious activity in groups organised by them with an approach tailored to the needs of young people, men and women, and other special segments of the popula-

[1] *One World*, No. 58, 1980, p. 7-11.

tion. This is carried out for the most part by services within Programme Unit III.

WCC leaders are expending a great deal of effort organising the so-called work camps, which they regard as one of the most effective means for drawing people into ecumenical activity. Representatives from many churches in a great many countries take part in the camps' work. Productive activity is combined in these camps with religious preaching, including the preaching of ecumenical ideas.

The ecumenical work camp on Bali was one such institution of long standing. It was founded by young people from churches in Australia, Indonesia, Canada, the United States, Ghana, and other countries. They began with the building of a livestock farm, which they gave over to the local inhabitants. Religious teaching was carried on at the same time. Similar camps were established in Thailand and Kenya.[1]

Given the general crisis in the church and the growing indifference to religion, the efforts by professional churchmen alone are insufficient to maintain faith. This explains the ecumenists' striving to awaken religious activity on the part of the laity.

The slogan "Laity as members of the Church in the world" was proclaimed in New Delhi. A department on the laity within the WCC's Division of Ecumenical Action was founded to make a reality of this slogan. The department's basic function was to

[1] *Ecumenical Press Service,* No. 35, 1964, p. 9.

collect information that could be used to stimulate the laity's participation in the activity of religious organisations. Ecumenists insistently advance the idea that man loses his wholeness in our "pluralist" world and only through being tied to a religious organisation can he be helped.

Catholics have also felt the need to draw the laity into church activity on a large scale. WCC representatives have established contacts with corresponding Vatican organisations in recent years, with the Committee of the World Congress of the Apostolate of Laity in the Catholic Church. These organisations came to an agreement about cooperating in training the laity and about corresponding information exchange.

At the Uppsala Assembly the WCC Department on the Laity was given the task of studying and gauging increasing participation by the laity in all aspects of church life. It was decided to train personnel for work in lay organisations: in the trade unions, political parties, and administrative bodies. Ecumenists demand of "Christian" scholars that they interpret correspondingly mankind's future in the light of genetics and outlined cosmological and other prospects for the world's development. "Christian" economists and sociologists must provide recommendations for the elimination of poverty in the light of the Christian doctrine about man, WCC theorists insist.[1]

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[1] *Work Book for the Assembly Committees,* WCC, Geneva, 1968, p. 29.

It is a generally known fact that women form the majority of members in religious organisations. All churches take this fact into account nowadays in their activity. They also take into consideration women's increasing role in public life as a whole. The Second Vatican Council pointed out the need to revitalise women's religious organisations. The ecumenical organisations show a growing tendency to use women as "clergy". The question is now being debated of whether women can be ordained. Women are being admitted in growing numbers to religious institutions of higher learning. The ecumenical bulletin enthusiastically reports the increasing number of women among students at religious institutions in Africa.[1]

The Department on Cooperation of Men and Women in Church, Family and Society coordinated the activity aimed at resolving these questions. It was especially active during International Women's Year (1975), as well as after the Nairobi Assembly when the WCC subdivision Women in Church and Society was established.[2]

Ecumenists are also showing heightened interest in the family. There has been discussion in Catholic and Protestant circles lately on the subject of "mixed marriages", i.e., marriages between people of different religious faiths, as well as about family and marital relations. As a result of missionary activity

[1] *Ecumenical Press Service,* No. 19, 1964, p. 14.

[2] *One World,* No. 4, 1975; *Women in a Changing World,* No. 4, 1978.

among the peoples of Asia and Africa the question of the church's attitude towards polygamy became acute. The Pan-African Ecumenical Seminar adopted a recommendation suggesting that "polygamous pagans" could be received into the Christian church after conversion with their wives and children. Many church leaders did not agree. Participants in a conference on the family in Kenya rejected such a solution, for it could, in their opinion, weaken "Christian efforts" to monogamous marriage in the country.[1]

The ecumenical bodies study other questions, as well, simultaneously with various UN and UNESCO organisations in an effort to work out a common plan of action and to enhance religion's prestige. These topics include family planning, women's working hours, women's educational level, the family budget, and so on.

All churches are concerned about the problem of drawing the younger generation into religion. Ecumenists therefore also seek to bring young believers into more active participation in the life of the church. The conflict between generations, about which there is much discussion in the West, also affects the ecumenical movement.

Albert van den Heuvel, Executive Secretary of the WCC's Youth Department of the Division of Ecumenical Action, raised this question in his report at the WCC Central Committee session in Enugu (1965). He observed that young people are less in-

[1] *Ecumenical Press Service,* No. 25, 1964, p. 7.

terested in purely religious questions than in the church's attitude towards the world: "They are no longer interested in such questions as faith and order or similar topics. Furthermore, they are increasingly critical of 'ecumenical organisation men'."[1] Trying to keep the young people in their ranks, ecumenists encourage the establishing of new links with the surrounding world. While young people show a greater interest in practical activity than in theological discussion, workers in the ecumenical camps, refugees and migrants (emigrants and immigrants) are becoming objects of ecumenical missionary work.

Most of the migrant workers are young people of various confessions. Special organisations of young Christians try to draw them into religious life in the countries where they are employed. Recommendations of this sort were formulated at the consultation in Mainau, in which representatives of the WCC, the Young Men's Christian Association, the International Catholic Migration Commission, the International Labour Organisation, representatives of a prominent West German industrial firm, and migrant workers from the Mediterranean area took part.[2]

WCC strategists today believe that young people's energy should be directed towards activity in small groups establishing immediate contacts between believers of different persuasions.

In addition, the WCC young people's magazine

[1] Ibid., No. 3, 1965, p. 8.
[2] Ibid., No. 24, 1964, p. 7.

speaks about the need to step up the "renewing influence" of Christian youth on the ecumenical movement and the establishment of a special "ecumenical youth fellowship".[1]

The re-training of young clergymen is conducted in the ecumenical institute located in the Château de Bossey, near Geneva. Each year dozens of representatives of different confessions and lay groups attend courses, conferences, and consultations organised by the institute. The basic postulates of Christian theology, its ecumenical prospects, and problems in the integration of missionary and church activity are discussed here. The institute conducts ecumenical training of theologians and laymen, studies questions in ecumenical relations between East and West, the position of the believer in his secular surroundings, and so on. In this way a substantial contribution to the ideological grounding of the bourgeois way of life is made and active religious propagandists are prepared.

5. THE INTEGRATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY WORK

The church's efforts to convert people to Christianity have always been strengthened by material charity.

Charity is one of the features of the bourgeois way of life. Lenin pointed out that charity gives the

[1] *Youth, Newsletter of the Youth*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1979, pp. 2-5.

wealthy "a very cheap way of justifying their entire existence as exploiters ... selling them at a moderate price tickets to well-being in heaven".[1]

Various forms of charity work are a favourite means for furthering Christian integration (inter-confessional assistance, aid to refugees, aid to the victims of natural disasters, etc.). Coordination of this work is carried out by the appropriate WCC service—CICARWS (Commission of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service), now a part of Programme Unit II "Justice and Service".

CICARWS coordinates work aimed at spreading Christian ideas carried out in six hundred projects providing aid to dozens of countries.

Organisation of refugee assistance in Europe began in 1939. The appropriate WCC division began to take shape at that time. It coordinates its current activity with actions by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, the Departments of Information and of Finance and Administration, mission services, with confessions not a part of the WCC, and with various UN organisations. For instance, an agreement was reached with Catholic organisations on rendering aid to the famine-stricken in India.

In the sphere of inter-church aid, the division carries out an intermediary function between "appealing" organisations (i.e., churches appealing for help)

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[1] V. I. Lenin, "Socialism and Religion" in *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 1978, p. 83.

and organisations "responding" to this appeal. Neither the "appealing" nor the "responding" churches need be WCC members.

It performs a similar intermediary function in cases of natural disaster. Many international and national organisations have taken part in eliminating the consequences of natural disasters in recent years. Church services also play a role in these actions, which the WCC tries to coordinate.

At this same time, CICARWS, together with the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations and the Central Committee of Mennonites, organised a committee to render assistance to a number of African countries. This committee carried out measures providing medical services and helped organise employment for the population, drawing people into reforesting work, hotel construction, the building of refrigeration units, and so forth.[1]

CICARWS is presently directing its efforts towards organising refugee assistance. According to statistics furnished by the ecumenical bodies, there are between six and eight million refugees in Asia alone. There are also a great many in Africa and other areas of the world. In the aftermath of events on the Indian subcontinent in the early 1960s, a large number of people fled Pakistan, among them Christians and peoples of other religions. The Indian National Council of Churches, together with the WCC, helped build temporary refugee camps and provided

[1] *Ecumenical Press Service,* No. 19, 1964, p. 14.

these camps with food, medical supplies, and, of course, "spiritual" nourishment.[1]

Even the American churches, which are the WCC's basic source of financial support, sometimes stand in need of ecumenical charity. CICARWS responded to an appeal from the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States to render financial assistance and help the Council put into operation their "Mississippi Delta" project under which the Council intended to aid the poverty-stricken population, organise educational institutions, and "reconcile" racial groups. "... The Mississippi Delta is a symbol of resistance to full racial equality, and the race problem is a world problem which the whole Christian world must help to solve," asserted one ecumenical document.[2]

In 1947 an ecumenical fund for church loans was established, and it provided more than 1,000 credits to various church organisations, thus becoming the financial basis for actions aimed at demonstrating church unity.

In the final analysis the functions performed by WCC services and divisions aimed at integrating the basic forms of religious activity (international, missionary, charity, and other forms) are intended to overcome the general religious crisis in the world today. It would appear that the ecumenical bodies will continue to use primarily these forms of ac-

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[1] Ibid., No. 16, 1964.
[2] Ibid., No. 17, 1964, p. 14.

tivity. However, they are also performed by other religious organisations (Christian, Moslem, and Buddhist). All of the WCC's actions therefore come up against corresponding efforts by its ideological partners-competitors. All this complicates resolution of the problems facing ecumenism.

Now we shall turn to an analysis of ecumenical discussion of the basic problems in public life today and, consequently, to an analysis of the ecumenical stance in the ideological struggle.

II

ECUMENISM AND THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE. THE INTEGRATION OF MODERN THEOLOGY AND BOURGEOIS SOCIAL THOUGHT

At ecumenical conferences Western theologians, along with sociologists, economists, and specialists in demography, law and other fields attempt to find a way out of the crisis experienced by various institutions of capitalist society, including religious institutions.

As a result, they are stressing the need to work out Christian principles of "social action", and are searching for a model of a Christian community capable of ironing out the contradictions in capitalist society today. The social-anthropological aspect dominates in contemporary ecumenical discussion. This tendency to establish Pan-Christian cooperation in the social and economic field suits the Vatican, as well. This is demonstrated by the activity of a joint Committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX) founded by Catholic Church and the WCC in 1968. This committee's activity is supported by monopolist circles (the Ford Foundation and others).

In his time, Lenin severely criticised all attempts to combine theology and sociology.[1] In our day the tendency to integrate bourgeois sociology and theology is acquiring ever greater proportions.

On the one hand, concepts are worked out and large-scale sociological research is being carried out with the goal of justifying religion and the church's right to existence, and even to show their progressive significance, and to point out the need for these institutions in social life today.

Theologians, on the other hand, willingly come to the aid of bourgeois social sciences and stress their importance in justifying religion. In his article, "Theology and Social Science", noted American ecumenical theologian Walter G. Muelder observed that "... empirical enquiry is able to clarify the operational meaning of theological concepts and claims. Theology needs to develop functional definitions of religion and of the way in which religious believing and behaving take place in different settings and cultures".[2]

The ecumenists' sociological ideas show an obvious striving to absolutise religion's integrative function in society and to stress society's need for religion.

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[1] V. I. Lenin, "A Letter to S. G. Shahumyan", in *Collected Works,* Vol. 19, 1973, p. 499.

[2] Walter G. Muelder, "Theology and Social Science" in *Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World.* Ed. by John C. Bennett, Association Press, New York, 1966, p. 346.

The cooperation between ecumenical theologians and bourgeois sociologists shows very clearly the tendency to "theologise" bourgeois ideology.

It should be noted that although the phrase "ecumenical social thought" is current in the theological press, a single Christian social theory does not yet exist. At present ecumenical discussion concentrates mainly on problems resulting from the technological and social revolutions, and on the elaboration of "models" of the future. It was these topics which served as the focal point of discussion during the preparatory period leading up to the ecumenical conferences on the Church and Society in 1966, 1970, and 1974, as well as in subsequent comments on their resolutions.

The ecumenical discussions make mention of various sociological notions reflecting the situation and the mood of the masses, including religious believers, in the capitalist countries, and in the developing and socialist countries. This is especially obvious in their appraisal of problems arising from the social revolution. Ecumenical circles include adherents to bourgeois "technocratic" theories and adherents to social change. But both groups, although they polemise with each other, naturally try to provide a Christian grounding for their ideas.

As one of the means of ideologically influencing the minds of the masses, the staff of many ecumenical bodies take part in the over-all system of bourgeois propaganda. Religious means of ideological influence are one element of the bourgeois non-governmental

ideological mechanism. Yet they possess a certain independence at the same time.

The religious system for ideological influence is made up of several levels aimed at given audiences. At the highest, theoretical, level religious, in particular ecumenical, concepts are formulated. Then ideological influence is effected on the mass audience. Ecumenists began to give serious consideration to elaborating methodological problems in Christian social teaching. A memorandum issued by the Zagorsk Theological Consultation (March 1968) notes several fundamental methodological principles which, in the opinion of the participants, help promote religion's role in modern conditions: cooperation with people of different convictions, practical agreement on questions in church life and theology on which there is as yet no unity, and the analysis of social conditions. These principles, in the ecumenists' view, should help to join analysis of social conditions to a specifically theological approach to them.

The ecumenical appraisal of social problems arising from the technological revolution could serve as a good illustration of this trend.

1. THE ECUMENICAL APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

The modern technological revolution has contributed to the emergence of new and complex socio-economic problems. Their nature, appraisal, and the

suggested ways of dealing with them vary in accordance with the society in which they arise: capitalist or socialist society. The appraisals of the technological revolution's influence on social development are also correspondingly different.

According to Marxist-Leninist theory, capitalist production relations stand in antagonistic contradiction to the objective needs of the development of productive forces. The technological revolution in capitalist conditions hastens socialisation of production, deepens the contradictions between the social nature of production and the state-monopolist means of its regulation, between the prospects for using scientific and technological achievements in the interests of society as a whole and the obstacles arising due to the monopolies' private property interests. Capitalist society cannot eliminate unemployment, satisfy the needs of the working people by improving the conditions of their lives, or solve the environmental problems.

According to such modern bourgeois theorists as Walt Rostow, Daniel Bell, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, the practical application of the achievements of the technological revolution (nuclear energy, computer techniques, and so on) could lead to a radical reorganisation of bourgeois society without class struggle or socialist revolution. The Marxist principle of social determinism (the socio-economic explanation of all social phenomena) is thus replaced by "technical determinism". Phenomena in social life are made dependent on production factors (the degree to which

science and technology are applied, the nature of their use, etc.). The decisive influence of the mode of production, the structure of production relations, and the forms of ownership are ignored.

Religious theorists, including ecumenical theorists, make their contribution in opposing Marxist-Leninist theory on this question.

Ecumenists acknowledge the differences in the social consequences of the technological revolution, but they ignore the class aspect of the problem and explain the difference by the degree of development of the country concerned. Because of this they often include both capitalist and socialist countries in the same group.

There are, however, substantial differences in the joint statements made by theologians and secular bourgeois theorists. These differences are above all a result of theological attempts to substantiate the need for religion in the technological era.

Some ecumenists proclaim that "the end of the split between faith and science" is at hand. Professor Samuel L. Parmar, one of the leaders of the ecumenical social programme, has observed that scientists and theologians by their joint efforts, can "transcend" narrowly technological solutions to social development problems. "The scientist who can see beyond the present level of knowledge, the social scientist who dreams of a new order, the humanist who is concerned about de-humanization of our structures and values, the theologian who struggles to incarnate the transcen-

dental into the existing situation, all of them are engaged in acts of faith."[1]

Some bourgeois scholars believe that religion itself will change under the influence of science and technology.

Dr. Emmanuel G. Mesthene, Professor at Harvard University and Executive Director of Harvard's Programme on Technology and Society, said in his speech at the Geneva Conference that our era gives us the hope that man will free himself from the "tyranny of physical nature" which has oppressed him from the very beginning of time.[2] Philosophical and scientific thought, he said, has always sought to understand the essence of nature and the meaning of human life. But nature's negative influence on man's strivings has always defeated him. Today, however, nature is becoming the object of man's planning efforts. Dr. Mesthene sees the "reason" of the Universe in the possibilities disclosed to alter nature, the animal and plant world. Man's increasing power over nature, according to Dr. Mesthene, should include religion in a new and loftier form. This modernised religion, in its turn, should "humanise" our relations with the milieu in which we live.

Other bourgeois religious scholars are more pessimistic in their appraisal of the importance of technological achievements for society's development. Typ-

[1] *From Here to Where? Technology, Faith and the Future of Man.* Ed. by D. Gill, WCC, Geneva, 1970, p. 8.

[2] *World Conference on Church and Society. Geneva, 1966,* WCC, Geneva, 1967, p. 14.

ical of this tendency are the observations made by Robert Theobald, an American sociologist and cybernetics expert and a participant in ecumenical discussions. He realistically points out the contradictory nature of the consequences of the technological revolution under capitalism and even criticises certain vices in bourgeois society. Technological achievements are twisted in this society, in his opinion, into making nuclear energy serve aggressive purposes. Cybernetic machines replace people in the production process, thus adding to the army of unemployed. The gap between the "developed" and "developing" countries grows deeper. The manipulation of man due to the control of information and biological control will acquire threatening dimensions before tasks in social and personal liberation are resolved.

Robert Theobald suggests drawing on religious morality for help, a morality which would supposedly abolish war and turn individual and national egoism towards the creation of a society of universal abundance and freedom for all. He believes that man's expanding possibilities for controlling nature will remain a misfortune in the midst of abundance until man's reason, reinforced by the church's moral influence, arrives at new, collective ideas. "The churches can recognize the realities and the challenge of the cybernated era, re-examine their position and struggle to promote the emergence of the new and better socio-economic order made possible by cybernation."[1]

[1] Robert Theobald, "New Possibilities in Modern Technology" in *Economic Growth in World Perspective.*

While Emmanuel Mesthene states in typical bourgeois liberal terms that all social evil is conditioned by man's inability to appreciate the harmony and "rationality" of existence and places his hopes in the assistance of divine forces, Robert Theobald tries to make his arguments closer to life. He counts on the church's activity as a social institution and highly rates religion's role in the formation of social awareness.

Bourgeois thinkers ask themselves whether technological progress helps to increase religion's influence. Most bourgeois experts answer this question in the affirmative. Jacques Ellul, a professor of law, says that the problem lies in the difficulty of relating "rational" man to technology, which is supposedly irrational in nature. While Emmanuel Mesthene sees man's emancipation in technological progress, Jacques Ellul sees man enslaved by this progress. But both agree that religious faith is capable of eliminating the conflict between human values and "technological culture" and helping man to shed the dynamic tension of "technologised society".[1]

Ed. by Denys Munby, Association Press, New York, 1966, p. 171.

[1] Typical in this respect is the so-called "modern scientist's prayer" written by a priest and UNESCO expert: "O Lord, we beseech Thy help to better understand what we should think about the extraordinary growth of technology's power in the modern world, to know what we should do in this situation in accordance with Thy design", etc. (*Logos*, No. 1, 1971, Paris-Brussels, p. 24, in Russian).

Drawing on similar ideas about the need for religion in the modern world and its compensatory function in the technological era, theologians have made new efforts to show the lack of opposition between science and religion. Ecumenists represent technological progress as a process prophesied by "Holy Scripture" and seek out its roots in biblical revelations.

Professional theologians have adopted the technocrats' idea about a "crisis" resulting from the development of science and technology. This crisis can be eliminated, they claim, by establishing effective control over technological development. Science and technology are not neutral forces. They act within the framework of ideological and ethical situations. Therefore, the ecumenists conclude, the question of control over technology is religious and ethical in nature.

Ecumenists treat problems arising from technological progress and man's control over it in accordance with the doctrine of "divine creation". According to this doctrine, man bears responsibility for everything created by God. Both nature and technology are divine gifts and man is obliged to use them without disturbing the over-all plan of creation: man is "the exemplar of creation and not the only creature of value.... The instrumental value to us must be weighed with the intrinsic value to itself and to God".[1]

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[1] *Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Section VI. Human Development—the Ambiguities of*

Ecumenists interpret environmental protection problems accordingly. One WCC appeal declared that "the environment crisis" in the capitalist world can only be solved by turning to the doctrine of "creation", which is currently being interpreted as God's continuing activity—in the creation of spiritual values, as well.[1] Ecumenists see God as the lord of nature, man, and society. God "is not just the God of nature", says Harvey Cox, Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Harvard University. "He is also the Lord of history, the supreme sovereign of political and economic life. He is now de-mythologizing the structures of corporate human existence and bringing them under human control, just as he once conquered the natural forces."[2] With this approach nature loses its objective nature and is included, along with man, in the historical process, the purpose of which is supposedly set by "divine providence". God's omniscience also determines the future of "technological man".

The profound crisis of religion in the modern world, as observed above, is closely linked with the secularisation of public life, a result of the social changes taking place in it. Technological progress also greatly contributes to this process.

Power, Technology and Quality of Life, WCC, Geneva, 1975, p. 36.

[1] *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXIII, No. 4, 1971, pp. 438-39.

[2] Harvey Cox, "The Responsibility of the Christian in a World of Technology" in *Economic Growth in World Perspective,* pp. 191-92.

The Marxist concept of religion views secularisation as a religious crisis, the process of believers' departure from organised religion, their liberation from control by the clergy and from the traditional religious way of life, as well as the affirmation of atheist and materialist world outlook.[1]

Many ecumenist theologians, like secular bourgeois theorists, recognise the secularisation process and try to study it and to work out recommendations for overcoming the religious crisis. However, they stress only one aspect of secularisation: the liberation of public consciousness and man's behaviour from religious influence and note the universal indifference towards church rites, the church's official teachings, and so on. In the final analysis, they reject the second aspect of secularisation—the spread of atheist, scientific-materialist views.

In the ecumenical view, secularisation appears to be historically logical, even somewhat positive process for the future. Secularisation, as they see it, should help cleanse bourgeois society from old-fashioned, traditional religion and affirm new, modernised religious feeling. This is the apologist essence of the ecumenical interpretation of secularisation.

The Uppsala WCC Assembly noted that "secu-

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[1] See *Towards a Society Free of Religion,* Mysl, Moscow, 1970; Ya. Guranovsky, "The Religious Crisis" in *Voprosy filosofii,* No. 7, 1967; D. M. Ugrinovich, *Introduction to the Theory of Religious Science,* Mysl, Moscow, 1973, pp. 139-85 (all in Russian).

larisation can recall us to true worship which affirms the reality of God, of man and of the world".[1]

The problems of secularisation were discussed for the first time at the ecumenical consultation in Bossey in 1959. A definition was formulated for this process which served as the point of departure for further discussion.

One participant in the discussion, the Dutch theologian A. van Leeuwen, links secularisation to Christian missionary activity. He views secularisation as man's liberation from despotism for freedom in society. But man's liberation is the central task of the church's mission. The theologian thus makes the conclusion about the link between "the mission and secularisation", and the existence of a "secular missiology".

Christian evangelism, van Leeuwen claims, is "the evangelism of secularisation". It follows then that "genuine" evangelism consists not so much in drawing new believers into the church as in "the renewal of society in the direction of a truly secular and man-made order of life".[2] In this connection the American ecumenical theologian Charles West suggests introduction of the term "secular theology" to describe social processes and the structure of society based on religion's dominating influence.[3]

[1] *The Uppsala 1968 Report,* WCC, Geneva, 1968, p. 80.

[2] A. van Leeuwen, *Christianity in World History,* Edinburgh House Press, London, 1964, p. 420.

[3] Charles C. West, "Community—Christian and Secular" in *Man in Community. Christian Concern for the*

The existence of men, chosen and called by God, is part of the historical process filled with divine dynamism. Thanks to Christ, man is drawn into all aspects of social activity, the theologian states. The conclusion is then made in a religious-existentialist spirit that man's true existence consists in his interpersonal relationships, the centre of which is occupied by Christ. The church, then, is shown to be an essential element in public life, a source of "freedom and justice". In Charles West's opinion, the church exerts a positive influence on international relations as well.

To the theologians who took part in the Geneva ecumenical conference, secularisation was a dynamic process in which the religious basis exerts either a direct or indirect influence on the changes taking place in society, including science and technology. If man loses his religious point of view, he may absolutise certain negative features of worldly life: the personal gain motive, pure rationalism, and so forth. This transforms secularisation into secularism. While secularisation, in theologians' opinion, links life's worldly aspects with transcendental "reality", secularism only absolutises the worldly material principle in its most mundane form.

In secularism "an absolutized assumption of the secular world begins to play a determining role comparable to that of religion in the sacred society" (i.e.,

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Human in Changing Society. Ed. by Egbert de Vries, Association Press, New York, 1966, p. 352.

a society in which religious-church system plays a decisive role.—*Yu. K.*).[1]

Theologians include Marxism within secularism, thus trying to detract from its importance in the eyes of believers.

As a consequence of "false" secularisation, in the ecumenists' opinion, man becomes alienated and falls into despair. Because theologians deny that religion itself is a consequence of social and ideological alienation, they only describe its external forms, which they link to absolutised "features of human activity" outside history. The real reasons for alienation, rooted in the social and class division of labour, remain concealed.

All the socio-economic systems of the secular world, the ecumenists say, create their own values and institutions, which become canonised: Man becomes the prey of new demonic powers created by himself. Therefore, theologians warn, when the oppressed struggle against the social structure hostile to them, against its values and institutions, this struggle must not be allowed to go as far as denial of God, for God is not responsible for alienation. On the contrary, they state, authentic service to God is the best way to overcome alienation.

Secularisation supposedly revives the church's forgotten, yet fundamental mission—to serve the world, for in the secular world the church can devote more

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[1] *World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966,* p. 159.

time to what it preaches. Thus, the church claims the role of creator of new social forms and man's "liberator".

Theologians regard religion as a basis for man's socialisation. But how can the close unity between the church and secular society be best ensured in practice? Ecumenists turn to the idea of bourgeois pluralism for their answer. The state of society which bourgeois theorists term "religious pluralism" is one form of secularisation. Pluralism, meaning in this case a variety of religious tendencies, has always been cited as one of the virtues of bourgeois democracy.

This view leads the ecumenists in the final analysis to a direct apology for bourgeois society and its attributes, including modernised religion. However, this view affirms religion's leading role in a pluralist (bourgeois) society.

Paul Verghese, a WCC leader, presents this objection to the bourgeois secular theorists: "Pluralism means more than mere variety. Without some unity within the diversity, we should simply have a chaotic or anarchic rather than a pluralistic society."[1] In Verghese's opinion, fixed "human" regulations are only capable of temporarily uniting society. Its "genuine" unity, in the theologian's opinion, originates from the divine principle. In this case, pluralism as a concept is derived from religious doctrine more than from social experience. The evolution of human

[1] Paul Verghese, "Secular Society or Pluralistic Community?" in *Man in Community*. . . ., p. 363.

relations in bourgeois society does not go back to the traditions of secular bourgeois humanism, but is interpreted as the "embodiment" of divine providence, which is seen as leading to the formation of a "pluralistic humanist community".

The bourgeois theorists' ideas about social pluralism have also been used by the ecumenical theologians to solve specifically religious tasks. This again clearly shows the community of views held by the bourgeois secular and religious ideologies. This is especially true of the relations between Christianity and other religions. As mentioned earlier, the various religious tendencies vie with each other for men's "souls". That is why Christianity is faced with the task of finding a theological and ethnical basis for a dialogue with other "living confessions".

At the 1971 WCC Central Committee meeting in Addis Ababa Metropolitan Georges (Khodr) criticised the traditional theological view of Christianity as an exceptional phenomenon. The ecumenical theologian affirmed the equality of all religions in his address and raised the question of "the authenticity of the spiritual life of non-Christians which raises the whole problem of Christ's presence in them".[1]

Metropolitan Georges supported his theses with references to early Christianity, seeing an analogy with today in early Christian experience. Referring to the authority of the "church fathers", he spoke of the existence of a "single God" present in different

[1] *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 1971, p. 118.

religions. This leads to the conclusion that Christianity does not exclude other religions. On the contrary, it should enrich itself through other religions. "There is a universal religious community which, if we are able to lay hold of what it offers, will enrich our Christian experience. What matters here is not so much that we should grasp the historical, literal, objective meaning of non-Christian scriptures, but that we should read these scriptures in the light of Christ."[1]

However, many participants in the ecumenical discussion did not agree with Metropolitan Georges's ideas.

Nonetheless, ecumenists have to take account of their non-Christian surroundings, both religious and non-religious. They have come to the conclusion that rapid Christian integration is prompted by the increasingly non-religious and atheist mood.

Listing the "dynamic factors" which, in his view, influenced the ecumenical situation, Dr. Visser't Hooft pointed out that the church will have insufficient influence in the world as long as it remains divided. The WCC leader cited the statement by Cardinal Willebrands (head of the Vatican's ecumenical programme, the Secretariat on Christian Unity) to the effect that secularisation is a problem facing all Christians and one confession alone cannot overcome it. Visser't Hooft goes on to draw the conclusion that secularisation serves to actually unite the churches

[1] *The Ecumenical Reviev,* Vol. XXIII, No. 2, p. 127.

and can even be seen as sanctified by God: "God is using this historical situation to draw the Churches together. The history of the ecumenical movement has shown us that Churches which undertake a great task together in the world begin to draw closer to one another."[1]

Ecumenists preach that the church as an institution is an essential part of any society: "No secular society can be authentic without the presence within it of the Christian community as temple of God and royal priesthood."[2]

What is more, ecumenists have to take into account the fact that secularisation, technological progress, and other factors change the nature of public life, thus altering the meaning of the most important Christian commandments and concepts. Interpreting the well-known Christian injunction to "love thy neighbour", ecumenists claim that the individual should feel confident of the existence of effective social means for his protection.

Many fundamental theological concepts are also being re-examined—"conversion", for instance. According to Protestant tradition, "the conversion experience is the initial stage in a lifelong process.... It is the Christian life in germ".[3] Taking this as the

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[1] *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXI, No. 4, 1969, p. 322.

[2] André Dumas, "The Ideological Factor in the West" in *Man in Community. ...*, p. 372.

[3] E. Mullins, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression,* The Hudson Press, Philadelphia, 1952, p. 53.

point of departure for their interpretation, ecumenists examined "conversion" as a man's personal reorientation towards God.

Taking into account the increasing socialisation of the individual and no longer relying on the believer's individual experience, ecumenists are now accenting the role of the milieu in man's "conversion". However, in this case real social relations lose their objective nature and become dependent on the supernatural. It is obvious that this runs directly counter to the Marxist-Leninist tenet that society is a system of material (independent from man's consciousness and the supernatural) and ideological relations which have developed in the course of men's lives.

Attempting to reconcile the contradiction between religion and technological progress and to draw on current technological achievements for theological purposes, ecumenists freely use statistics provided by bourgeois sociologists. Interpreted from the theological point of view, these statistics are meant to shore up the shaky foundations of modern scholasticism. In their sociological research carried out on secularisation and the technological revolution, ecumenists are especially interested in using the mass media, which serve bourgeois "mass society". "We have seen that the media of mass communication are both a product and an accelerator of the process of secularization."[1]

[1] *The Uppsala 1968 Report,* p. 395. A critical view of the technocratic approach to the mass media's role and explanation of the Christian approach to the question are

The technological revolution does not lessen but, on the contrary, increases the class contradictions in capitalism, intensifying the ideological struggle, lending it new forms, and providing new technical means. The mass media are one of the channels actively used in today's ideological struggle.

The church has a lively interest in the possibilities for manipulating the "mass awareness". A World Conference on Social Communication took place in Mexico in 1970. The conference was attended by bourgeois sociologists (Paul F. Lazarsfeld and others) and psychologists, as well as by so-called specialists on the mass media and those engaged in them. The reports at the conference stressed the need for the church to participate in the mass media. Some speakers pointed out the importance of "biblical standards" in the formation of new standards of the bourgeois way of life.[1]

While giving their due to this appraisal, ecumenists claim a leading role in overcoming the difficulties encountered by the secular empirical experts. The WCC Assembly in Uppsala criticised those who underrated the social role played by the mass media, their role in forming many aspects of public life, including, of course, religious life: "Communication is the fabric of life. It is by communication that

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contained in a book by the noted ecumenical publicist, J. Bluck, *Beyond Neutrality. A Christian Critique of the Media,* WCC, Geneva, 1978.

[1] *WACC Journal. World Association for Christian Communication,* Vol. XVI, No. 3, 1970, p. 45.

we become what we are, both in our corporal and our spiritual life. Communication is also the way in which God makes himself known to man, and man responds to God."[1]

Recognising the active role played by the mass media in creating its own audience, the church makes full use of the media to maintain its influence on believers and attract those outside their ranks. In modern bourgeois society a large number of people do not attend church but have contact with religion through the mass media. Theologians therefore recommend saturating radio and television programmes with religious content in order to draw consumers into mass religious services and sermons, and to acquaint them with on-going events in church life, and so on.

On the one hand, the church organisations, along with the secular mass media, objectively assist in developing people's divisiveness through developing stereotyped bourgeois individualism in them. On the other hand, the theologian experts in public relations strive to heighten the sense of community among this mass of people by making them follow religious-bourgeois norms of social behaviour (preaching "universal concord").

Bourgeois socio-political organisations, supporting the church organisations, make the mass media increasingly available to them to expand the influence of religion and to enable it to play its role in the ideological struggle.

[1] *The Uppsala 1968 Report*, p. 394.

2. SOCIAL CHANGES AND NEW THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

In the modern era—the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism—social change and, first and foremost, social revolution, have become especially topical problems in the ideological struggle. The world revolutionary process has acquired such enormous scope that it cannot be ignored, and even bourgeois ideologists have to evaluate it in some way.

However, the social revolution becomes somewhat distorted in the bourgeois theorists' interpretation. They tend to reduce the essence of this revolution to the changes introduced by the technological revolution, and some try to replace the social revolution with a technological one (Daniel Bell, Hermann Kahn, Anthony Wiener, and others), while others attempt to replace the social revolution by a "revolution in consciousness" in the spirit of the petty-bourgeois, utopian teachings of Herbert Marcuse, Charles Reich, and other theorists.[1]

Lately bourgeois sociologists have been worried not only about how to ensure the stability and functioning of capitalist society (the schools of structural-functional analysis and technological determinism), but also by changes in this society, changes which do not, however, lead to its revolutionary transformation.

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[1] See *The Battle of Ideas in Present-Day World. Basic Trends and Problems of Ideological Struggle,* Politizdat, Moscow, 1975 (in Russian).

Representatives of various ecumenical organisations take an active part in the ideological struggle over social development.

The church's traditional hostility towards revolutionary movements is no secret. However, today when "the mass of religious people can become an active force in the anti-imperialist struggle and in carrying out far-reaching social changes",[1] ecumenical circles have been forced to re-examine their former positions. Participants in the ecumenical discussions take as their point of departure a recognition of the need for social changes. Unfortunately, they do not present a clear idea of what these should be and tend to gloss over the opposition between socialist and bourgeois revolutions. The ecumenical movement includes various points of view reflecting the mood and situation of the masses, including believers, in the capitalist, developing, and socialist countries. On the one hand, these are partisans of "revolution" in the theological sense. On the other, these are partisans of the bourgeois "technocratic" approach to revolution, which reduces social revolution to technological revolution.

On the whole, the social revolution is interpreted by the ecumenists in an anti-Marxist spirit. Their views have, however, undergone a certain evolution. At the World Missionary Conference in Mexico ecumenical theologians examined the masses' revolution-

[1] *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969,* Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, p. 27.

ary mood and actions in terms of Christian reconciliation: "Reconciliation of men to God and men must in our day include not only persons but also institutions and national and international life.... It may mean Christian witness in and to the power structures; it may mean revolutionary protest...."[1]

A more radical mood has grown up in recent years in ecumenical circles. Ecumenical documents point out that revolution is a constructive step in the development of a society (with reference to the French bourgeois revolution in the 18th century) and criticise the churches' negative attitude to revolution, even allowing Christians—as a last resort—to take part in violent forms of struggle. Otherwise, ecumenists warn, religious propaganda will lose its influence among the broad masses. Moreover, theologians realise that "today, a significant number of those who are dedicated to the service of Christ and their neighbour assume a more radical or revolutionary position".[2]

The conclusion would follow, then, that church organisations should learn how to influence the masses gripped by social protest in order to preserve the basic institutions of bourgeois society. Theologians regard the religious-secular movements as a decent basis for social change.

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[1] *Witness in Six Continents,* Edinburgh House Press, London, 1964, p. 153.

[2] *World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966,* p. 49.

At the same time ecumenists strive to ignore or gloss over the class nature of social change and to explain the basic contradictions behind social conflicts in the modern world as contradictions between "rich" and "poor" countries, rather than class-based contradictions.

However, we should keep in mind that religious figures from the developing countries also participate in the ecumenical movement, and some of these leaders take into account the anti-imperialist mood in their own countries.

Given the two existing world social systems, the developing countries are faced with choosing their own path of social development. Many representatives of the developing countries have condemned the economic "aid" offered by the Western countries with its new socio-economic enslavement. Their position has been supported by the churches from the socialist countries. "We Christians must not stand aside from the efforts made by the peoples in the less developed countries where progress is being hindered by the imperfections of their existing social structures, and we must struggle for economic and social development."[1]

Ecumenists are also striving to formulate their own doctrine of revolution (termed "theology of revolution" in some documents). One variation was contained in a memorandum issued by the Zagorsk

[1] *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 6, 1968, p. 75.

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The document stated that revolution means "the coming of an entirely new order, often aggressively opposed to the preceding order". The ecumenical notion of social revolution is inconsistent, ignores the class aspect of the problem, and is objectively opposed to the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution.

On the one hand, ecumenists interpret revolution as a change in society's socio-political structure. They view its main goal as the establishment of "democracy" and recommend this "type of revolution" for countries where, in their opinion, democracy does not exist. Ecumenical theologians believe, however, that revolutions up to the present moment have only succeeded in establishing new privileged groups without achieving their main goal—"the people's expanded participation" in guiding society.

On the other hand, revolution is interpreted by ecumenists in a narrower sense—as change in society resulting from technological achievements or other factors. They include various types of social protest movements under the heading of revolution.

Ecumenists strive to reconcile revolution with biblical commandments. The modern revolutionary movement, in their view, is a result of a new understanding of "human dignity", a concept which biblical commandments have been instrumental in creating.

Dr. Choan Seng Song, an ecumenical leader from Taiwan, outlined a typical view of revolution in one of the WCC's youth magazines. He interprets the

biblical parable about the coming of "the kingdom of God" and the "multiplying" of wealth (Luke 19:11-27) as a "parable of revolution". According to Dr. Song, Christ is not urging men to be acquisitive in this parable, but to take part in revolutionary activity and "to take their fate into their own hands". The cross is the beginning of revolution. "The true revolutionary never dies, and Jesus was and is a true revolutionary. He rose from the dead. This is the most astounding kind of revolution."[1]

The ecumenists therefore manage to link revolution with eschatological ideas, and revolutionary theory with theology. Revolution can be thus interpreted as the world's effort to express in a historical form something that reflects eschatological renewal of everything existing, promised by God.[2]

Ecumenists have shown particular interest in the practical means by which revolution is carried out. In a revolutionary situation, they recommend, Christians should do everything possible to perform a conciliatory role, so that revolutionary changes will

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[1] C. S. Song, "A Parable of Revolution" in *Youth. Newsletter of the Youth Office. Education and Renewal Unit,* WCC, Geneva, April 1978, p. 15.

[2] M. P. Mchedlov observes that even in the so-called "theology of revolution", which aims at overcoming the "prejudice" that the church rejects revolution, effort is made to reject the existing socialist revolution and real socialism, and to replace them by a socio-ethnical movement inspired by Christian ideas (see *Religion and the Church in the Modern Era,* Mysl, Moscow, 1976, p. 218, in Russian).

be carried out peacefully or, at least, with a minimum of violence.

Some ecumenical theorists are striving to introduce corresponding changes in theology. In the opinion of American theologian Dr. Richard Shaull, theological reflection is linked to today's revolutionary situation. Other ecumenists disguise petty-bourgeois revolutionary notions in religious garb.[1]

Recently there has been lively discussion in ecumenical circles about "the theology of liberation". In their discussion ecumenists draw on the ideas of the noted Protestant theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Protestant variation on the "the theology of liberation" has found its embodiment in practice in the activities of the Church and Society organisation in Latin America (ISAL movement). Adherents to this movement are trying to solve certain problems in the church's stance in given social situations with regard to definite social processes. They include in these problems: overcoming the dualism between "the church and the world", recognition of the church's deep involvement in the secularisation process, religion's attitude towards the ideological struggle, and Christians' behaviour in various social situations.

Another prominent ecumenist, José Miguez Bonino (WCC President during the 1970s), stated at

[1] Typical in this respect are references by the ecumenical theologians to the writings of Herbert Marcuse. They draw a parallel between petty-bourgeois revolutionary ideas and New Testament appeals for man's "liberation" for the glory of God.

an ISAL meeting that the church must "convert itself to the world". Participants in the movement proclaimed vaguely "that the Church had to accept the emancipation of the world from the institutional and intellectual controls of dogmas and the autonomy of culture, of human reason, economics, politics, and social organization".[1] They urged Christians to take a more active part in their countries' political, cultural, and trade union organisations.

Many ecumenists regard "the theology of liberation" as a specifically religious expression of "the Latin American soul", a methodology for applying the principles of Christian "redemption" to concrete conditions in the Latin American countries. Theologians have commented on this line of thought, saying that "the theology of liberation" is founded on the "transcendental" and "supernatural" elements in Christianity.[2]

Supporters of "technocratic" notions in the ecumenical milieu have sought to reply to the challenge of the "revolutionary" theologians. Theological "technocrats" include, among others, the authors of the official report delivered at the Geneva conference on world economic development. This report recognised the opportunity for economic change without altering the essence of bourgeois society and recommended

[1] *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, 1976, p. 190.

[2] Theo Tschuy, "Liberation of Latin American Christianity" in *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXX, No. 3, 1978, p. 263.

various international actions to eliminate disproportions in socio-economic development, as well as conflict between capitalists' desire to attain higher profits and demands for an "equal" distribution of the social product. The report's authors spoke of re-examining trade and customs policies taking into consideration the interests of the developing countries, and the possible future adoption of a world economic plan which would reflect the interests of all peoples. "God is concerned in such technical problems as liquidity, the terms of trade, tariffs, and infrastructural development. To think or act otherwise is to create a false dichotomy and to try to confine God within an ecclesiastical system divorced from the world he died to save."[1]

The practical activity mentioned in the report was intended to be joint action by the church and the bourgeois states. Addressing the World Church Consultation on Development, a representative of the West German government praised the church's role and urged its leaders, along with all the capitalist world's institutions, "to assist in the development" of peoples, especially in the developing countries, along pro-Western lines (for instance, by organising an international financing bank). "The churches by themselves will not be able to change the social structures, but they can make a contribution if they extend their work to the whole society.... In the field of

[1] *World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966*, pp. 89-90.

development assistance, the churches can show better than elsewhere that they do not exist for their own sake."[1]

As a result, ecumenical circles pay increasing attention to general problems in "development" and to how to achieve development in practice. In offering the developing countries a capitalist path of development, ecumenists try to indicate the means for this development and its goals. They are participating in discussion of various short- and long-term developmental programmes.

Struggling to influence the churches in the developing countries, the ecumenical bodies suggest changing trade relations in order to prevent "exploitation" of the developing countries by the developed capitalist countries. Criticism has been voiced at ecumenical forums in the developing countries themselves of the national imperialist groups. The Indian economist, Professor Samuel L. Parmar, one of the leaders of the ecumenical consultation on development, observed that "domestic imperialism" was the basic reason for political instability in many developing countries.[2] Criticism was voiced in this same spirit of the highly advertised "green revolution" (intensification of agricultural production), which imperialism was trying to turn from "an instrument of social

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[1] *Fetters of Injustice. Report of an Ecumenical Consultation on Ecumenical Assistance to Development Projects*, WCC, Geneva, 1970, p. 81.

[2] Ibid., p. 142.

change" into a weapon for social oppression in many developing countries.

Ecumenists cannot ignore the fact that many developing countries have chosen a non-capitalist path of development. Serious differences of opinion have grown up among them on this point. Some ecumenists even discuss the advisability of applying the Marxist concept of economic development to the developing countries (their attention is particularly focused on the changes achieved in Cuba). They spare no effort to show that they are eager to search for "new economic forms".

Despite the ecumenists' efforts to reject the class approach to analysis of world events, the religious organisations' activity takes place in the context of class struggle. The ecumenists are therefore forced to take into consideration the link between economic programmes and political and ideological factors. Here, too, however, they try to gloss over the conflict between the Marxist-Leninist and the bourgeois ideology. The ecumenical theologians have especially singled out "the liberal school", whose adherents reject the economic planning, regard maintaining "balance" between agricultural and industrial production as the most vital factor, and propose to perfect modern market relations by means of gradual reforms.

This tendency is opposed by the so-called "structuralists". According to them, a society can only attain stability through changes in its socio-economic structure, beginning with its financial system and ending with control over the production of consumer

goods. They devote serious attention to agricultural production and are highly critical of "aid programmes". However, they also prefer the path of gradual reform.

Ecumenists uncritically compare Marxist views with these bourgeois theories. They include Marxists among "structuralists."

Ecumenist ideologues speculate on the fact that some communist parties leave room for structural reforms in their programmes. However, they ignore the fact that Marxists regard these reforms as an instrument of class struggle, a means of peacefully developing the socialist revolution and joining the struggle for democracy with the struggle for socialism.

Disagreeing with both the "liberals" and the "structuralists", ecumenists offer the developing countries their "models", which bear resemblance to such bourgeois theories as "stages of economic growth", "convergence", "modernisation", and others.

The "modernisation" theory is advocated in church circles by the Dutch sociologist and prominent ecumenist, Egbert de Vries. It includes the basic ideas of the teachings about "a single industrial society" and "stages of economic growth". The class essence of this theory consists in its opposition to the Marxist teaching about socio-economic formations, its opposition to an appraisal of the modern historical era as a period of revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism. The church, writes de Vries, is called to assist in the process of socialising the individual and to show its concern that the in-

dividual's integrity and dignity be regarded as the highest value of "modern industrial society".[1]

Ecumenists also support other bourgeois theories. At the Geneva Conference in 1970 the English political figure Jeremy Bray introduced three "intermediate concepts" into ecumenical discussion which, in his opinion, would make it possible to overcome the socio-ideological opposition between capitalism and socialism: "the open state", "the regenerative society", and "the adaptive economy".

Jeremy Bray claimed that these concepts bring abstract models of the state apparatus closer to solutions to concrete political problems.

The concept of "the open state" envisages optimal publicity for the state bodies' activity. Free elections should be complemented by a broad check on all political structures and the decision-making process.

The concept of "regenerative society", in Bray's opinion, makes it possible to overcome static bourgeois-liberal ideas of "equality", "fraternity", and so on. "A regenerative society is a dynamic concept in a way in which welfare, equality, and even brotherhood are not. It translates them into terms appropriate to a rapidly changing situation."[2]

"Openness" and "flexibility", as qualities of a "regenerative society", are created by a so-called "adaptive economy". It is the latter, Bray claims, that

[1] Egbert de Vries, "From Tradition to Modernity" in *Man in Community. . . .*, p. 36.

[2] *From Here to Where? Technology, Faith and the Future of Man*, p. 70.

makes it possible to "overcome" the opposition between the socialist and capitalist systems.

At the same time Bray suggests complementing these concepts with Christian ideas. These latter would give new significance to secular intermediate concepts: "The open state affirms the central importance and personal character of truth. The regenerative society reflects the redemptive mission of Christ and his Church. The adaptive economy reflects the continuing work of God in creation."[1]

The bourgeoisie make use of ecumenical concepts and the ecumenical organisations as a channel for influencing the developing countries. Ecumenists observe that the churches in the Western countries frequently feel the "temptation" to take money from their own governments for the needs of the developing countries. However, it then transpires that, despite their protests of selflessness, this "aid" has strings attached to it. The Western transnational corporations and governments do everything possible to include the developing countries into their sphere of influence.

However, as a result of the growth of the national liberation movement and the resistance offered by the developing countries to imperialism's neocolonialist policies, the ecumenists have been forced to take account of public distrust in these countries for the activity of the Western churches and their local followers.

Nonetheless, the ecumenists not only feel it nec-

[1] Ibidem.

essary to carry out development programmes initiated by the monopolies, but also try to broaden the field of their application. To this end, the WCC research bodies select and evaluate aid programmes, study social groups who perform an intermediary role in effecting this aid, and so forth. Control by the church and national councils of churches over carrying out the programme is an obligatory condition.

Ecumenical theologians express the desire that close links be established between the developed capitalist and developing countries, and that the same country be allowed to be both a donor and a consumer of development aid. It is obvious that links of this type are advantageous above all to the developed capitalist countries and help to turn the developing countries into sources of agrarian produce and raw materials for international imperialism, a sphere of monopoly investments, and a market.

Richard Dickinson, an American Professor of Christian Social Ethics, terms policies of this kind "relational programs". According to his views, the development of this type of relations should lead to the integration of all aspects of society: class, racial-ethnic, religious, and so on. This form of social development is especially attractive to theologians because it is "closely linked with the ethos of the churches—with their emphasis on liberation, reconciliation and *koinonia*".[1]

[1] Richard Dickinson, "Toward a New Focus for Churches' Development Projects?" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, 1970, p. 217.

The ecumenists also see the forms of WCC financial aid as dependent on the organisation's proselytising goals. Usually the WCC member churches offer financial aid in the form of donations. But, taking the view that this type of charity affects the "consumer churches" independence, ecumenists recommend providing aid in the form of loans. We have already pointed out that ecumenists encourage private investment in every way.

The second trend in ecumenical discussion concerns developmental goals.

The "technical" approach to development stands out above all. In this case certain measurable indicators of economic development are taken into account: aggregate national product, per capita income, growth in employment ratio, production indices in various economic branches, etc. Development is thus identified with growth in production and enrichment. Ecumenists ascribe this goal in a tendentious vein to the Marxist concept of development, thus trying to make it "bourgeois".

Bourgeois sociological and religious concepts reduce social development to only partial changes in a society's social structure. The system of capitalist exploitation remains unaltered. This is the class essence of such theories.

A truly adequate concept of development, the ecumenists believe, should take into consideration interpersonal relations and socio-psychological factors, and development itself is always accompanied by social integration. Christian integration, which helps to unite

society, as they claim, is the only true path of development.

There is, however, no single point of view in religious circles either on Christian models of development, or on participation in development programmes.

Ecumenists admit that many churches are too conservative and believe that taking part in development programmes distracts them from their basic purpose, dictated by religious faith. From this point of view socio-economic development problems are purely secular, and the churches are not obliged to take part in solving them. Taking into consideration the variety of social situations, ecumenists are elaborating many "modes of action", both "reformist" and "revolutionary". A final solution to socio-economic problems, they believe, is only possible within the context of messianic ideas.[1]

The ecumenists accuse secular theories, including the Marxist, of a utilitarian-economic approach to social development. Conversely, the Christian approach supposedly derives from a recognition of the need to integrate all social factors, both material and spiritual, in the development process. "This Christian vision of development would have to transcend the technical concept which aimed at economic

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[1] *WCC. Report of the First Meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Search for a "Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society". Geneva, Dec. 11-14, 1977,* WCC, Geneva, 1977, p. 8.

growth, even at the expense of growing national and international injustices."[1]

Ecumenical representatives believe that the secular bourgeois organisations, both governmental and private, which bear the basic responsibility for development projects, should divide this responsibility with the church. They suggest using the church's experience in spreading religious ideas to this end, as well as the church's charity funds.

Ecumenists assert that there is no truly just model of social organisation. "There was certainly no consensus on the question of how to create a society based on social justice."[2] The conclusion follows that until such a "model" is worked out, all "transformative" reforms, including revolutionary ones, will be useless.

All this shows clearly how hopeless ecumenists' attempts are to "rise above capitalism and socialism", attempts which turn into an apology for bourgeois society.

The theorists of the ecumenical movement encountered great difficulties in formulating a theological basis for social development. Although they say that the Bible does not give any direct indication of what the church should do to promote development, they nonetheless attempt to draw support from the Bible. The formulas contained in the documents of the All Africa Conference of Churches in Abidjan

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[1] *Fetters of Injustice*, p. 142.
[2] Ibid., p. 143.

(1969) leave little room for doubt on this point: when considering the problem of development the church should keep in mind that it has its roots in biblical theology.[1] Ecumenists suggest that they can take part in development planning by the government and correct defects in this planning, thus helping bring about social justice.

Ecumenical theologians discriminate between theological problems of development and problems in the choice of concrete development programmes. The former supposedly should be formulated on a strict biblical basis, while bourgeois social sciences may be applied to the latter range of problems to forecast the consequences of various actions.

Ecumenists are forced to respond to other problems, as well, in the rapidly changing social situation. For instance, theologians and bourgeois sociologists are especially concerned during this era of revolutionary disturbances as to how the capitalist political system can be preserved. Naturally, both groups try to "improve" the existing capitalist system in the hope of maintaining the traditional bourgeois democratic institutions and, at the same time, try to adapt them to state-monopoly relations. The much-advertised Christian political neutralism is thus violated in practice.

Theologians and bourgeois ideologists recognise the need for "centres of power" in society, in which

[1] *Engagement Abidjan, 1969. All Africa Conference of Churches,* Nairobi, 1970, p. 107; *One World,* No. 35, 1978, p. 12.

they include various types of political organisations (state bodies, parties, labour unions, and so on). Ecumenical theologians admit that these organisations embody in part the power "bestowed upon man by God", and thus help strengthen the bourgeois establishment.

They popularise views held by bourgeois sociologists, who regard the state as a supra-class phenomenon serving the interests of a "single nation" and regulating all the elements in the society's political system. "Although the powers of the state are limited, both factually and morally, the state must have means of controlling other centres of power."[1]

Ecumenists provide recommendations on the functioning of the state. They regard it as obligatory conformity to the Constitution of all actions by the state, the existence of opposition parties, direct links between the "people" and representatives of the central government, and control over the mass media. The role of various types of organisations which take part in political activity is especially stressed. Religious groups are included among them: "...The church may often find occasion to remind society and the state of their cause."[2] Church leaders include within such "occassions" various recommendations, dialogue with political leaders, the sending of their representatives to secular organisations, public statements on legislative questions, and so on. All this

[1] *World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966*, p. 99.

[2] Ibid., p. 101.

is meant to help establish, in theologians' opinion, a "rational" society. This latter is seen in very vague terms, with "Christian integrity" the only clearly stressed feature in it.

Ecumenists devote great attention to legal questions connected with the ruling class's political interests, and even seek to evolve a special teaching, the so-called "theology of state and law". In July 1970 an international colloquium on the relations between law and theology took place in Geneva. Among the participants were representatives from the supreme courts of the capitalist countries, the UN International Court of Justice, and prominent theologians. The participants unanimously spoke out in favour of "intensified" dialogue between theologians and legal experts, especially on the relations between the authority and the law.

Theologians exaggerate the role of the law, regarding it as an independent factor alongside the state, and derive their very concept of the law from biblical "anthropology". The principles of bourgeois law are thus complemented by religious tenets holding that norms of behaviour should conform to God's commandments and to some abstract, "natural" human essence. Theories aimed at shoring up the principles of bourgeois society are forced into this concept of the law.

Apologetical theories aimed at glossing over the opposition between capitalism and socialism have always been widespread in ecumenical circles. The notion of a "free society" was advanced in the 1930s.

Then the notion of a "responsible society" appeared, which the church tried to use to give its own interpretation of the need for social change and which by and large coincided with the notions of an "open society", "social partnership", and the like. Ecumenical documents in the 1940s observed that in a "responsible society" men were free, but this freedom should be combined with "responsibility" to the established social (bourgeois) order. The ruling circles of this society bear "supreme" responsibility to God.

Modern ecumenical theorists (Visser't Hooft, Roger Mehl, H. D. Wendland) continue this traditional apology. Roger Mehl regards the "responsible society" as a model of Christian humanisation of the social order interpreted in the spirit of eschatological ideas. Wendland devotes serious attention to society's secular features, among which he includes freedom, equality, humaneness, and partnership. He believes that these norms still only become effective when they are observed by individuals and public organisations alike: "Ecumenical use of the term 'responsible society' makes it clear that it implies demands not only upon the individual but also upon institutions in society."[1]

A similarly apologetic role was played in the 1970s by the notion of a "sustainable society" based "on the evident need to the world's economic possi-

[1] H. D. Wendland, "The Theology of the Responsible Society" in *Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World,* p. 136.

bilities and its material requirements in some kind of equilibrium".[1]

Ecumenists regard religion as an age-old principle of renewal in social development. With this goal in mind, attempts are being made to create a theological doctrine of social change and to link theology to ideology (in its theological meaning). The notions of "Christian solidarity" and "divine renewal", supposedly universal and constant in nature, are applied to solving the first part of the task. Christian solidarity, which manifests itself in people's activities, in the ecumenists' opinion, finds expression in "freedom" from existing society. Theologians believe that man's solidarity with God in all situations, including revolutionary one, can overcome the faults of "man in revolt" depicted in Herbert Marcuse's books.

"Divine renewal", as the ecumenists see it, not only points to what is new in events taking place in the world today, but also stresses the importance of the preceding process of development, thus negating man's "pure" revolt. But above all, theologians contrast this view of renewal with the Marxist-Leninist teaching about social revolution.

Ecumenical theorists are showing increased interest in various types of protest movements. For instance, Christian youth circles have appraised "the emergence of the New Left as a serious political force".[2] Theologians have closely analysed the history

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[1] *Anticipation*, No. 18, 1974, p. 4.

[2] *Trying Times. American Politics in Transition from*

of this movement and its tendencies for future development.

Despite claims that philosophy, science, and other forms of social consciousness in capitalist society today have been "de-ideologised", the ideological struggle in society is intensifying. Ideas developed in bourgeois sociology and philosophy, including religious philosophy, are popularised through the mass media, thus influencing people's minds and behaviour. The church also participates actively in the ideological struggle.

Its role in the struggle of ideas has acquired more refined form.

The leaders of the ecumenical movement adhere to ideological pluralism: "The World Council of Churches is led by two or three ideologies. Now that structural changes are at stake, the need for such ideologies is more urgent than ever before."[1]

Some theologians admit that theology has ideological overtones, but they do not see theology as class-based. It should be pointed out that theologians today are assiduously trying to stress the active nature of Christian ideology. They claim that it "remains a discipline which aims not at a theoretical system of truth but at action in human society.... Theology reflects not only action but interaction between God's

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the Sixties to the Seventies, Vol. 1, No. 1, World Student Christian Federation, Geneva, 1971, p. 12.

[1] Hendrikus Berkhof, "Re-Opening the Dialogue with the 'Horizontalists'" in *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXI, No. 4, 1969, p. 294.

revelation and man's ideological understanding of his own condition and desires".[1]

In actual fact, the churches' practical activity boils down to an attempt to reconcile the class contradictions in modern life by correcting individual faults in capitalist society. They are trying to iron out the negative influence of class struggle on the stability of bourgeois society.

On the whole, bourgeois ideology, including religious ideology, is incapable of understanding the essence of the revolutionary changes taking place in the modern world because it is itself a product of this system, to which the revolution is opposed. Lenin stressed that "the bourgeoisie's recognition of the revolution cannot be sincere, irrespective of the personal integrity of one bourgeois ideologist or another".[2]

3. THE ECUMENICAL FORECASTS CONCERNING THE FUTURE

Ecumenical ideologists attempt to forecast technological and social progress by using the methods of secular bourgeois futurology. Futurology, in turn, assigns religion a constructive role in society's future.

The first generation of bourgeois futurologists gave religion a very insignificant place in their research. The field belonged to ideas derived from secularised

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[1] *World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966,* pp. 201, 202.

[2] V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" in *Collected Works,* Vol. 9, 1965, p. 126.

bourgeois humanism, which gave rise to a "technological optimism" of sorts. Man was believed to succeed in freeing himself from domination by natural and social forces with the help of science and technology.

A great many notions about the future have appeared in the West in recent years. Bourgeois futurologists feel a growing lack of confidence in the future. "Technological optimism" has been replaced by "technological pessimism". Irrational tendencies in forecasting the future have intensified, and theologians have seen the opportunity to give a religious interpretation to futurological problems. They freely use theories about "post-industrial", "technotronic" and "post-economic" society elaborated by bourgeois sociologists and futurologists such as Hermann Kahn, Daniel Bell, and Jean Fourastie. Their theories negate the existence of class contradictions in modern capitalist society and advance the idea that the development of capitalism will lead to a reconciliation between classes; they also replace class categories with "supra-class" concepts, which suits theologians very well.

Paul Abrecht, the Executive Secretary of the WCC Church and Society Programme, said in outlining a theological interpretation of the future that "the questions facing man and society in the future will be no less religious than they have been in the past".[1]

[1] Paul Abrecht, "The Future as a 'Religious' Problem" in *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXIV, No. 2, 1972, p. 177.

Abrecht provides a theological interpretation to basic tendencies in the economic-political sphere, the technological revolution, and the cultural revolution. In his view, the social and racial protest movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as the increasing demands for social changes in developed capitalist countries, have produced a spiritual crisis which religion can help to overcome.

Appraising the prospects for the technological revolution, Abrecht examines anti-technocratic ideas, in particular statements by New Left theorists with their notion of the "counter-culture". The theorists of this movement, born of the contradictions in today's state-monopoly capitalism, tend towards utopianism in their views on the future and frequently draw on religious symbolism. Paul Abrecht, for instance, analysed the interpretation of "technocratic" society given by Theodore Roszak, one of the New Left theorists, as a protest against the "worship of things" and as a "spiritual challenge" to the modern positivist-secularised world-view. Abrecht was very pleased to find religious aspects in Roszak's writings.

Like bourgeois sociologists, theologians avoid the question of radical socio-political problems resulting from the technological revolution, regarding its consequences for the most part from an ethical point of view. Like bourgeois futurologists, they are concerned that the social evolution of bourgeois society leads not to stability and order but, on the contrary, to an intensification of social and class conflicts. Abrecht comes to the conclusion that the technological

revolution cannot solve socio-ethical problems. On the contrary, it creates a paradoxical situation for man: he becomes his own oppressor. At first, writes the religious futurologist, man was "enslaved to nature", but now man is "enslaved to his mastery of nature".[1]

As for the prospects for cultural development, Abrecht optimistically observes that developmental tendencies in modern bourgeois culture enhance religion's opportunities for the future. Abrecht refers to statements by American sociologists, who point out the importance of "the religious problem" for the future of American society, as well as to the French sociologist and futurologist, Jean Fourastie, who writes about the "paradoxical" situation which has grown up in religious life and is characterised, on the one hand, by an obvious crisis of religious belief, and on the other hand, by the renaissance of "the reality of religious experience" and of the "sense of having to live by faith and hope in a transcendent vision".

Paul Abrecht cites the ideas of the American sociologist and futurologist, Daniel Bell. In Bell's view, culture has become the most dynamic factor in modern civilisation, providing the impetus to search for new and original forms for the future, yet at the same time this culture has produced a social crisis and issued a challenge to moral values. He regards it as "adversary culture" giving rise to "an apocalyptic moods and antirational modes of behaviour". The re-

[1] Paul Abrecht, Op. cit., p. 182.

ligious futurologist ends his analysis of Daniel Bell's statements with a typical conclusion: "Thus the search for cultural and moral identity gives the future its religious significance. . . ."[1]

The 1970 ecumenical conference in Geneva, as well as the conference on "Science and Technology for Human Development" held in Bucharest in 1974 were both devoted to problems in man's and society's future.

The noted theologian, Harvey Cox, has said that he does not believe that "the future is going to be very secular" and he has even predicted "a rather dramatic religious renaissance, both in western countries and certainly in some of the non-western countries".[2]

Defining the church's role in the "new world", Cox believes it necessary to restore monasticism, which would supposedly make it possible to carry out "a varied and interesting divergent series of experiments in how people can live together creatively in community".[3]

Basing themselves on the negative attitude towards technocratic tendencies in bourgeois society, theologians frequently write that society's future should be founded on men's direct relations with each other and with nature. They insist that Christian ethics and theology be endowed with "an aesthetic principle".

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[1] Ibid., p. 184.

[2] Harvey Cox, "Faith for a New World" in *From Here to Where?* . . ., pp. 84-85.

[3] Ibid., p. 86.

Renewed theology should relearn "its forgotten language of the arts" and draw freely on "visions, poems, songs, legends, myths, given order by those great creative artists, the master theologians, and re-presented by living communities in a gallery church".[1]

Abrecht mentions two types of eschatological interpretations of the future: "the vision of revolutionary millennialists" and "eschatological 'realism' ".

Theologians make use of an analogous method of forecasting in their futurological predictions. Historical analogies for modern processes and tendencies are looked for among religious movements of the past.

The first type characterises moods and concepts held by followers of radical religious movements (mainly consisting of young people). Theologians see an historical similarity between them and the mood of medieval "revolutionary millennialists and mystical anarchists". Their "rebellious" spirit was not constrained by any concrete demands, but forecast the world's universal transformation and "redemption". The "millennialist views" (the expectation of the

[1] Ibid., p. 86. Speaking at a conference in Chicago on the future of religion, one of the leaders of the National Council of Churches of the United States, Dr. John E. Biersdorf, pointed out possible models for religion of the future in the present: the repetition of the Pentecostal experience—the descent of the Holy Spirit—in many religious communities, religious communes, liturgical experiments, and so forth. Group psychotherapy has also been mentioned (see Hiley H. Ward, *Religion 2101 A.D.*, Doubleday, Garden City (N.Y.), 1975).

thousandth year of "God's kingdom") of today's religious radicals consists in "an ideal of the individual's total emancipation from society and external reality". They retain the illusory hope that society can take an instantaneous great leap forward, freeing all men from "oppressive structures" and "false ideologies". The social conflicts of modern bourgeois society are reflected in a curious way in the views of these religious radicals. Religious youth leaders adopt the stance of prophets exposing a "sinful world" and prophesying its early downfall.

Representatives of the second type of eschatological views on the future take as their point of departure the limited nature of human possibilities. Any suggestion that men can change society by themselves is rejected, inasmuch as any such activity is linked with satanic forces, and every rationalist interpretation of the future is held in deep suspicion by adherents to this trend. Thus "eschatological realists" base their futurological predictions on hope in divine provvidence, which is constantly demonstrated, so they believe, in human history, especially in the life of Jesus Christ.

Many bourgeois sociologists-futurologists believe that consolation and eschatological hope will help to overcome modern bourgeois society's crisis and explain the meaning of the social and technological changes, as well as prospects for the future.

Futurologists from the theological camp go even further: they believe that eschatological hope will stimulate all mankind's spiritual strivings and draw

mankind into energetic activity. Paul Abrecht, commenting on the results of the Burcharest ecumenical conference (1974) drew a distinction between "Christian hope" and "the perplexities of the technological future".[1]

A tense struggle is under way between the adherents to both types of interpretations of the future, a struggle reflecting different levels of believers. Representatives of "eschatological realism" accuse "the millennialists" of simplification, fanaticism, and making concrete socio-political programmes absolute. For their part, the "millennialists" accuse the "realists" of returning to traditional religious teaching and departing from the real tasks of social life.

Leaders of the ecumenical movement strive to "reconcile" the two points of view. Paul Abrecht, for instance, points out the virtues of both positions and predicts a future dialogue between them: "... Both have grasped some essential element of the Christian understanding of man and its meaning for his life in the world. The debate between them becomes more urgent precisely because the 'future' as a religious problem raises so many new possibilities and so many challenges for both these historic Christian viewpoints."[2]

Many of the WCC documents reflect ideas aimed at reconciling the two opposing social systems—capitalism and socialism. "There is no kind of economic

[1] Paul Abrecht, "An Ecumenical Vision of the Future Perspective" in *Anticipation*, No. 18, 1974, p. 5.

[2] *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, p. 189.

system within which the Christian Church is not found, and on the whole Christians tend to support the kind of society in which they live."[1]

It is necessary, they recommend, that the achievements of an economic system based on private enterprise, as well as of a system based on a centralised, planned economy be used and a new, "higher" type of society be created from them. However, a closer examination of this society shows only a modernised and "beautified" version of capitalism. "Neutral" ecumenical analysis again turns out to be a refined apology for bourgeois social relations. With this goal in mind, ecumenists use in their statements the notion of "quality of life", aimed at glossing over the sharp edges in social conflicts in Western bourgeois society. They claim it is necessary "to sustain a worthwhile quality of life" for present and future generation.[2] Among the criteria used to determine "quality of life" ecumenists list access to education, a high standard of health service, social security, and other factors. A religious-ethical ideal is regarded as the loftiest value in "quality of life".

Unlike religious futurology, which founds its idea of the future on a utopian, illusory social ideal, Marxism-Leninism rests on the real laws of social develop-

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[1] *World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966*, p. 57.

[2] *Uppsala to Nairobi.* Report of the Central Committee to the Fifth WCC Assembly. Ed. by D. Johnson, WCC, Geneva, 1975, p. 116.

ment. This is why Lenin wrote that Marxism never feared to give "a bold forecast of the future" or to take "bold practical action for its achievement".[1]

4. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE THEOLOGICAL AND MARXIST VIEW OF MAN

The ideological and political crisis in modern bourgeois society is especially evident in the attitude towards humanist problems. These problems have been brought into relief by intensifying class, racial, and religious conflicts, and the moral crisis.

In his report to the WCC Central Committee meeting in Canterbury, Eugene Blake stressed that the study of man's nature is one of the most important themes for theological discussion within the ecumenical movement.[2]

The Marxist-Leninist classics underscored the dialectical relationship between the biological and social elements in man and his activities: "The history of nature and the history of men are dependent on each other so long as men exist."[3]

Man is a complex fusion of biological and social elements in which the social elements dominate and

[1] V. I. Lenin, "Karl Marx" in *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1974, p. 72.

[2] *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, p. 334.

[3] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology" in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 28.

decisively influence the natural elements. Man's nature is social. "The essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations," wrote Karl Marx in his sixth thesis on Ludwig Feuerbach.[1]

Man's position in society is determined by his belonging to a class, social group, and political party. Man's social essence is determined by such factors as his working ability, his social activity, and communication with other men. Man's thought processes are a result of his social life. He is also a product of history. While transforming the natural world around himself by his work, man also changes his own nature. Man is changed by his social activity, but it cannot fundamentally alter his own nature. The fusion of natural and social elements is shown in man's work (i.e., in his social activity).

Unlike scientific Marxist-Leninist teaching, bourgeois ideology is characterised by a vulgarised, one-sided approach to man's nature, for this ideology stresses the division between the social and the biological factors. This approach is often used in today's sharp ideological struggle to justify reactionary socio-political solutions.

The theological view holds that man is a product of divine creation. Ecumenical theorists hold to this tradition, yet also hope to shore up such weak theological theories with facts supplied by modern science

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[1] Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 7.

and philosophy[1]: "For Christians and for the churches and church organizations the faith in man as created in the *image Dei* and *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* is a vital resource in struggling for human becoming and against all obstacles to being truly human."[2]

Many works written by David Jenkins, noted ecumenical theologian and director of the ecumenical programme on the study of man, provide further theological justification for these views.

Jenkins attempts to join bourgeois philosophy to theology, thus "renewing" Christian anthropology and even linking the question of man's origin with the evolutionary process and defining man's specific nature. For him man is "a *language-using* animal and . . . a *decision-making* animal".[3] The use of language and the need to make decisions, he believes, gives people the opportunity to create various social forms and cultural values, as well as to be free.

Jenkins focuses attention on one of man's features —his need for "self-expression", i.e., man's striving to realise himself and his abilities. He ignores man's social transformative activity, thus destroying the dialectic of objective and subjective factors which is

[1] Materials from the Fifth WCC Assembly (1975) state that the key to understanding human existence should be sought in Christian "experience, tradition, and doctrine" (see *Uppsala to Nairobi*, p. 51).

[2] *The Humanum Studies, 1969-1975.* A Collection of Documents, WCC, Geneva, 1975, p. 78.

[3] David Jenkins, "Toward One New Man in Jesus Christ" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 1971, p. 160.

so necessary in analysing human existence, and instead pays tribute to bourgeois individualism.

Fearing that he will be accused of extreme individualism, however, Jenkins tried to solve the question of the link between the individual and society. He claims that man can exist and develop only in contact with other people. But in bourgeois society, Jenkins says, most people tend to view their neighbours as a threat to themselves. Indeed, man may very well live in fear in a society with constant economic crises, growing unemployment and crime. The problem, however, is that Jenkins sees this fear as a constant feature of human existence in any society.

Jenkins tries to fill out his analysis with scholastic ideas about "the human dimension" and the application of "socio-economic parameters" in developmental planning as factors which would "humanise" life. But this does not change the over-all pessimism of his views.

Jenkins pays tribute to bourgeois theories of man's "inborn aggression", thus leaning towards a simplistically biological concept of the laws of social development. He reduces social relations to relations between master and slave. Given such relations, the ability to communicate, the sole means of social and human development, is lost. The enslaver crushes the slave as a person. This situation is found not only in the political-legislative sphere, but also in the educational system, in trade, and other fields. It is only natural, the theologian concludes, that for the slave to maintain his personality he must struggle for his

personal independence. It is obvious that this conclusion will not help organise the enslaved for a concerted struggle.

Jenkins also tries to treat questions arising from technological progress and demographic development ("the demographic explosion", environmental pollution, etc.).

Mankind, Jenkins says, is using up world resources faster than they can be replaced by nature. Further environmental pollution is thus caused and there is a very real threat that the environment which supports human life will be destroyed.

Drawing on ideas typical of bourgeois sociology, Jenkins advises strict control of population growth on a global scale, although he admits that demographic planning contradicts the interests of individual population groups and individuals: "It would seem that particular human beings and their future are being sacrificed in the search for an overall solution to a general human problem."[1]

Jenkins is certain that, in the final analysis, divine providence will help mankind overcome all difficulties: "I believe that all the struggles, failures and achievements experienced in all the human particularities throughout history are capable of being redeemed from their negative aspects and fulfilled in their positive aspects in a culmination of human community and communion which I call the Kingdom of God."[2]

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[1] David Jenkins, Op. cit., p. 159.

[2] Ibid., p. 162.

Thus, Jenkins builds his forecast for mankind's future on a transcendental, divine basis.

A Christian solution alone to mankind's problems does not suit the ecumenists. As mentioned earlier, they wish to establish contact with followers of other religions, as well as with non-believers.

Bearing in mind the global interests of ecumenism, Jenkins says that mankind's future lies in service to a single God, not necessarily the Christian God: "There must be no take-over bids in history but humble collaboration with and for the purposes of God in history and beyond."[1] This, by the way, provides a theological basis for the ecumenical missionary efforts.

Nonetheless, Jenkins links this transcendental basis with the human basis, drawing on the official theological doctrine about Christ the God-Man (ecumenism is a Christian movement). Christ is both the embodiment of the divine and the personification of the human: "He is the embodiment of transcendence in the midst of human life, he is *Emmanuel;* God with us and for us and as us, He is God present in, and suffering with, human problems."[2]

Jenkins finds support in teachings of the "church fathers" belonging to the Alexandrian school for the Christological concept he seeks—"the way through the particularities to the one new man in Jesus Christ

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[1] Ibid., p. 163.
[2] Ibidem.

where there will be a universally shared fulfilment of all our human particularities".[1]

According to theological doctrine, the total humanisation of society, its "humanity", can only be attained by learning religious truths, by coming through "discipleship" with Christ. Theologians strive to work out a concept of human existence that would enable them to evaluate concrete "human situations" from a religious point of view, and which would conform to modern science (anthropology, genetics, etc.). They have received support from several religious scientists on this point.

American anthropologist Margaret Mead, for one, is an active participant in ecumenical discussions. From the anthropological point of view, Margaret Mead says, the ecumenical movement is a mode of behaviour in a situation of historical incongruity, an attempt to create a new community and new educational methods, to solve the problems connected with the world population. Margaret Mead's public statements have advanced the idea that modern "cultural anthropology" is capable of fundamentally assisting theology and Christian thought. By studying man's past and present, and his cultural and social establishments, anthropology—in her opinion—helps man choose consciously between good and evil. "Thus, modern cultural anthropology and modern biological theory have summarily resolved the conflict between Christian ideas of the person and nineteenth-

[1] David Jenkins, Op. cit., p. 165.

century conceptions. . . . Modern anthropological theory provides a scientific background for the acceptance of man as part of the living world of God's creatures. . . ."[1]

Examining various institutions in bourgeois society—the family, the community, the mass media, Margaret Mead attempts to disclose the mechanisms in social integration that could be used to bring about Christian integration.

At the Geneva Conference on Man's Future (1970) reports were delivered by the American geneticist, Theodosius Dobzhansky, on "Human Evolution and Ethical Issues", by the Australian biologist, Charles Birch, on "Human Implications of Discoveries of the Biological Sciences", and by the Norwegian biochemist, Agnar Nygaard on "Eugenics and Human Dignity". These reports outlined the prospects for and problems in human genetics, with a special emphasis on the eugenical approach which aims at actively remodelling man's genetic code to fit a preset ideal. The ideal varies from the reactionary to the liberal-bourgeois. Those who support so-called "positive" eugenics seek to re-fashion the human race on the basis of selection. The theological conference heard some very unusual terms: "germinal selection", "artificial human insemination", and so on.

However, the claims made by the eugenicists have been criticised both in the West and in the Soviet Union.

[1] Margaret Mead, "Cultural Man" in *Man in Community. . . .*, p. 202.

Theologians also learned about the problems of "negative" eugenics, aimed at protecting genetic inheritance from harmful influences.

The reports at the ecumenical conference brought up the ethical side to experiments on man: who can judge what is good and what is bad in man? Will the very fact of artificial insemination be traumatic to a person conceived by this method? How will such new practices affect the institutions of marriage and the family? The opinion was expressed at the conference that the ethical aspect of scientific discoveries is more important than the inherent value of the discoveries themselves. Therefore, all scientific research into human nature should be subject to religious and ethical control.

Ecumenical theorists outline their interpretation of "humanity" based on the following points: (a) man's readiness to obey and suffer, (b) man's readiness to resist, and (c) readiness to take responsibility for the tasks facing him today.

An important function of Christian behaviour, in ecumenists' opinion, is man's ability to withstand the dehumanising effect of the "anonymous" social mechanisms in bourgeois society. Theologians link the individual's ability to offer such resistance to "Christian hope" and the development in men of "critical feeling", rooted in "spirit and faith" and which enables man to distinguish between the true and the false, and between "light and darkness".

The church strives to develop in its followers a readiness to take responsibility for the work the

church assigns them. Ecumenists claim that development of this third feature of "humanity" stimulates men's creativity and lends optimism to human existence.

Responsibility for decisions should be combined, for theologians, with free choice. They believe that New Testament commandments give scope for such a choice. The Christian role in changing the world will correspond to man's nature (it will be "human") if it is free from the compulsory influence of "socio-political and ideological determinism" and totally prompted by the religious ideal.

Man in modern bourgeois society is the object of intensive, contradictory influence by regulators of various types, the mass media, and suggestion, which condition his life and influence his behaviour and consciousness. Theologians try to soften the regulating influence of the state machinery by means of religious and ethical rules, thus objectively shoring up bourgeois ideology.

Divine mercy, which alleviates the tension generated by the technological and dehumanising forms of life in modern bourgeois society, also imposes its own obligations. The first and foremost of these is subordination to God's will and the biblical commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (the Gospel According to St. Matthew, 22: 37). Ecumenists claim that this supreme biblical commandment is Christianity's most important contribution to preserving men's human essence.

The ecumenical theorists claim that the acceptance of responsibility to God "liberates" man. In entrusting himself to the All-Mighty, man frees himself from the contradictory obligations and tasks generated by his social existence. Man will then no longer need to worry about mankind's future, which is provided for in God's plans, and he can direct his energy easily and joyfully towards his own immediate business. This concept of man's role in modern society, the ecumenists say, is in agreement with the "doing theology" aimed at linking scholastic ideas to immediate tasks: "Doing theology involves being the Church in and through the human struggle and exploration."[1]

After the 1966 Geneva Conference, ecumenical theorists energetically tried to join Christian anthropology to the theological doctrine about the church (ecclesiology). A special typology of church communities was elaborated for this purpose. By means of this classification, theologians are trying to represent the church as an essential element in any society.

Proceeding from the need to continue ecumenical discussion and trying to reconcile differences of opinion in the Christian churches, Jenkins stressed several points in his report which were to form the basis

[1] *The Humanum Studies, 1969-1975,* p. 105. The Orthodox ecumenist, N. Zabolotsky, suggests linking the necessity for social activity by the believer to a modernised concept of Christian asceticism ("secular asceticism") (see *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate,* No. 3, 1977, pp. 54-55).

for a future research programme into the nature of man.

Taking into account the increasing role of the churches from the developing coutries in the ecumenical movement, Jenkins recognises that previous research methods, including his own, are based on a pro-Western approach to the individual and his interrelation with society, and insists on cooperation on these questions with Asian and African theologians which should help in spreading Christianity in the developing countries. Research of this type, in his opinion, would make a major contribution to the movement for "one new man in Jesus Christ".

Human activity and the forms of man's existence should be linked, according to Jenkins, to divine transcendence. The theologian therefore adds one more trait to his definition of man as a language-using and decision-making animal: man is also "a worshipping animal with dimensions of art, celebration and contemplation".[1] "Worshipping" the supernatural, the theologian says, is a major faculty distinguishing man from animals.

Theologians have not been able to link man's social essence to his individual existence. In capitalist society, man's essence is alienated from him. Karl Marx wrote that estranged labour "estranges from man his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual aspect, his *human* aspect".[2]

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[1] *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, p. 165.

[2] Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts

Thus, the theological interpretation rests on an approach typical of secular bourgeois philosophy and sociology. This approach is based on a profoundly erroneous methodology which rejects the world's material unity and the qualitative specificity of its various manifestations, both natural and social.

Marxist-Leninist teaching stands in contrast to these secular and theological theories, affirming the principles of real humanism and assisting in the all-round education and harmonious development of man in the new communist society.

5. THEOLOGY AND THE BOURGEOIS "ORGANISATIONAL THEORY"

"Organisational theory" in the West has become a special branch of knowledge aimed at substantiating various establishments and organisations in modern bourgeois society, as well as aiding in their consolidation and improvement. Bourgeois ideologists widely circulate ideas of advancing "organisational" or "organised" society.[1]

Religious theorists have lately made broad use of organisational theory, simultaneously striving to enhance its prestige. It has been of special interest to ecumenists in connection with the nature of the

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of 1844" in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 3, 1975, p. 277.

[1] See D. M. Gvishiani, *Organisation and Management,* Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972.

church's organisation, its role in bourgeois society, and man's place in this organisation.

In substantiating the inevitable, eternal nature of the church's existence, theologians are pursuing far-ranging goals. As a result, the church community and organisation are seen as an essential element in social structure. The World Ecumenical Conference in Bangkok stressed the need for special study of the attitudes different segments of society take towards various social institutions, including church institutions.[1]

Ecumenists criticise the traditional theological view that all conflicts and contradictions typical of secular organisations automatically cease to exist in the church community. On the contrary, they say, the church produces its own additional problems resulting from ethnic, geographical, and social factors.

Ecumenists use the special concept of an "heretical structure", signifying religious and inter-confessional organisations which discourage believers by the manner of the divine service, preparations for it, financial expenditures, and other factors. The "heretical nature" of these structures consists in their being static, which makes them lose their function. Ecumenists believe that this factor was instrumental in the failure of Christian missionaries in Africa, when they ignored local conditions. Therefore, the theolo-

[1] *From Mexico City to Bangkok. Report of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, 1963-1972,* WCC, Geneva, 1973, p. 42.

gians conclude, confessional and ethnic traditions should not be measured according to one standard. The church's "universal nature" is a result of the interaction of all confessions.

Social changes produced by the religious crisis in the modern world are also affecting the local religious community's structure. The problem is that the traditional community corresponded to an agrarian, static, and religiously conformist way of life. Inasmuch as this form of social life is becoming less and less typical, given urbanisation and industrialisation, the need to change the religious community has arisen.

Ecumenical leaders recommend that the WCC member churches participate in the search for new types of communities. They stress the fact that the community as a social-religious group in which cultural values are passed on and the individual is shaped, is becoming increasingly complex as this community becomes a part of the system of new social interactions and contacts. These changes are also affecting family relations. In the agrarian community of the past, the family and other inhabitants of the village made up a unified milieu of economic and other forms of activity, while activity in the modern urban community has a much broader scope. The importance of production ties is especially intensifying. A non-working member of the family may have close ties only with his immediate surroundings in the area in which he lives, but a working person is in contact first and foremost with his colleagues at work.

The theologians who take part in ecumenical discussion acknowledge the crisis in the family and marriage produced by changes in social life in modern bourgeois society, by urbanisation, and by "the sexual revolution", as well as other factors. It is only natural that they see the church as the sole guarantee against moral decline. At the same time ecumenists are re-examining the traditional Christian concept of marriage and the family.

The Christian notion of the family derives from the Aristotlean thesis of the family as the basic social unit. This notion is especially widespread in the writings of Catholic and Orthodox theologians. However, it is being re-examined by ecumenists today. West German ecumenical theologian Helmut Begemann writes that society in the "personal age" is founded on individual responsibility and that family influence has receded into the background. The basis of society is composed of "divine presence": "God as the primal community is the basis and origin of community."[1] Moreover, the Christian church should not, in Begemann's view, sanction any one type of family (monogamous, patriarchal, or other) to the exclusion of other types.

From the Marxist-Leninist point of view, the social aspect of family and marital relations is determined by the unity of the two basic spheres of social life: the production of material and spiritual benefits and the production of offspring. Family and marital

[1] Helmut Begemann, "The Changing Family in the West" in *Man in Community....*, p. 138.

relations are a part of social relations, and the family is a specific form of the social community. Theologians, on the other hand, link family and marital relations to the divine origin.

Ecumenical forecasters hope to work out a form of community in which all of its members can fully develop themselves as individuals: "New forms of community must be developed for the new conditions of modern life.... Christian fellowship should help each person to achieve (a) a sense of security, (b) a sense of worth, (c) a larger degree of freedom, and (d) a belief in the significance of his existence."[1]

Ecumenists develop the idea of the "open" nature of the religious community which functions in constant contact with its secular surroundings, and attempt to elaborate a unified strategy for various forms of church activity in "the human zone": missionary and charity activity, activity affecting the production sphere, the organisation of leisure, corrective institutions, and so forth. Striving to make use of every social situation for their own purposes, ecumenists distinguish "special attention zones": military matters, racial conflicts, and so on. "In a society characterized by differentiation and specialization, the ministry of the whole Church must also be differentiated to engage the world at all its diverse points of need."[2]

[1] *World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966*, p. 158.

[2] *The Church for Others and the Church for the World*, WCC, Geneva, 1967, p. 27.

First and foremost, theologians link the function of the community to the attaining of religious goals. According to James Gustafson, an American theologian whose views reflect ecumenical opinion, these goals are shown especially clearly in three aspects of the community's functioning: in cultural and ethical relations, in inter-personal relations, and in organised (institutionalised) activity.

All forms of religious activity are carried out with a sense of responsibility. "Life in community is also life in common responsibility.... Interpersonal relations are relations of responsibility."[1] Religious control is intensified, according to ecumenists, because responsibility in the community is lined to duty: "Life in community is life in a structure of moral obligations, of claims upon persons and of claims upon groups."[2] The highest duty of a community is to fulfil its duties to God.

Gustafson examines the duties of the community members in the sphere of organised activity where moral sanctions are translated into legal obligations. The Christian view not only sanctions already-existing laws. Social institutions are interpreted as a tangible form of man's duties to God and other men. "The Christian community is obligated first to God and then to and for the institutions in and

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[1] James M. Gustafson, "A Theology of Christian Community?" in *Man in Community...*, pp. 184-85.

[2] Ibid., pp. 186-87.

through which duties toward God and the neighbors can be carried out."[1]

Ecumenical research into the laws of organisations' formation and functioning is a result, in the final analysis, of changes in the social and religious life of bourgeois society. Ecumenists themselves refer to certain "unfavourable factors" influencing the joining together of confessions. The changes which have taken place are in fact due to the following factors:

Firstly, the general crisis in the institutions of modern capitalist society. As a result, many of the regulations which previously guaranteed the stability of socio-political organisations have lost their meaning. An increasing number of adherents to the new view on Christian activity to achieve church unity are appearing in ecumenical circles.

Secondly, the ferment in religious life and the emergence of various groups and movements within the church—"the sudden proliferation of ecumenical activities on the local level", as theologians say. This fact has made ecumenists turn their attention to theoretical theological problems of "order and organisation", and the following questions have been posed: "What are the elements which make the Church the Church? What is the centre of the identity of the Christian community?"[2]

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[1] James M. Gustafson, Op. cit., p. 189.

[2] *Faith and Order, Louvain, 1971,* Study Reports and Documents, WCC, Geneva, 1971, p. 117.

Thirdly, the emergence of "independent" African Christian churches (as mentioned earlier, they play an important role in the ecumenical movement on the African continent) and the increasing activity of the Pentecostal movement, some representatives of which are establishing contact with WCC bodies. The theology and practice of these churches regards the activity of the "Holy Spirit" (mysticism, ecstasy, healing, prophecy, and so on) as central to their beliefs. Traditional Catholicism and Protestantism have underrated these factors. The Uppsala Conference stressed the "pneumatological" aspect of faith. Ecumenists have been forced to search for something to correspond to this in established church and missionary practice.[1]

It may be useful to learn a few basic facts about the evolution of the ecumenical approach to the problems under discussion which has taken place over more than forty years.

The early stage of study can be seen from the documents of the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order (1937). Problems in the religious community and its structure were discussed at the time from the point of view of "non-theological factors". At the Lund Conference (1952) these factors were defined as "social and cultural".

A commission of theologians, sociologists, histo-

[1] Ecumenists have attentively followed and analysed various types of mystical (charismatic) movements (see R. Davis, *Locusts and Wild Honey. The Charismatic Renewal and the Ecumenical Movement*, WCC, Geneva, 1978).

rians, and other representatives of the bourgeois social sciences was formed and carried out research into institutionalism as a component of these factors. A report of the commission on "Institutionalism and Unity" was published in 1961 and later discussed at the Montreal Conference (1963).

At the same time church structure was discussed by the North American Commission on Faith and Order. Attention was focused on examination of the relations between "order and organisation".

As a result of the integration between the WCC and the IMC (New Delhi, 1961), an ecumenical programme was launched for the study of the missionary structure of the congregation. Ecumenists tried to link the study's sociological aspect with an explanation of the empirical manifestation of the divine.[1]

At a meeting of the commission in Aarhus (1964) the theme "Spirit, Order and Organisation" was adopted, and later discussed at the conference in Louvain (1971).

The formation of a religious community as a social institution is tied to real social processes. That is why the study of these processes is very important for an appraisal of the relations between the church and the world around it, and the place of the church in society.

In the theological view, these processes acquire a distorted character, for the stress is placed on the

[1] *Faith and Order, Louvain, 1971*, p. 123.

decisive role of the supernatural. Nonetheless, it is this sphere which shows the closest cooperation between theology and bourgeois sociology. Their cooperation is offiicially recorded in ecumenical documents, the authors of which stress the need for unity between empirical sociological research into institutionalism and theological theory. Ecumenists claim that questions concerning the unification of the churches as institutions cannot be decided through the direct carrying over of doctrinal and ritualistic principles. Their solution demands practical wisdom and close acquaintance with the work of social organisations. On the other hand, they continue, since the Christian Church is a community, sociological analysis should be included within the theological framework, inasmuch as the subject of discussion should be organisations in line with the church's true nature and task. "Theologically speaking, organization is the product of the interaction among the creation, the Creator, and humankind. Specifically, organization is one of the principal ways humankind participates with the Creator in the creation."[1]

Ecumenists have turned to the sociological doctrine of institutionalism in order to analyse the church's basic traits as a social institution and the processes by which it is formed. According to this concept, a religious community is a durable organi-

[1] M. Miller and A. Kelley, *Theology, Human Organization, and Ecumenism. Toward a Theological Understanding of Organization for Ecumenists,* Living Ecumenism Series, Series 3, No. 3, NCC, 1978, p. 1.

sation with its own goals, means, system of evaluation, and sanctions, one which carries out certain specific functions (missionary work, charity work, regulation, etc.).

Ecumenists are primarily interested in the religious organisations' formation, therefore they devote special attention to the so-called "agents" of institutionalisation. They use this term to denote the various factors which determine the functional stability of these organisations. Thus, the theory of institutionalisation studies the process by which relatively simple communities become complex organisations and the interaction between the various factors (agents) in this process. It is this interaction that ecumenists stress in their analysis of religious organisation.

Inasmuch as the basic task of ecumenism is the establishment of a united church, its theorists have stressed in every way the importance of developing organisational links for the purpose of religious integration, and this has helped bring about new church organisations.

In their analysis, ecumenists have been forced to take into account the complex interaction between various factors in the churches' activity. For instance, national and geographic factors have made possible the integration of American religious groups and their break with the European churches. Yet the ecumenical movement in the United States has encountered difficulties because of racial conflicts. Segregation prevented the total unification of Methodist communities.

In the final analysis ecumenists have had to take account of class differences (as bourgeois sociology understands this concept) and their influence on the formation of religious organisations. According to statistics furnished by American sociologists, social differentiation in the basic confessions participating in the ecumenical movement in the post-war period has been as follows (in per cent)[1]:

Confession	Businessmen and professionals	Office employees	Urban manual labourers	Farmers
Methodist	19	19	39	23
Baptist	12	14	52	22
Presbyterian	31	21	31	17
Lutheran	13	18	43	26
Episcopal	32	25	36	7
Congregationalist	33	19	28	20

Although this break-down is very rough and tends to gloss over the existence of antagonistic classes, it clearly shows the problems faced by ecumenists in the United States.[2]

The ecumenists' sympathy to pluralism was mentioned above. It was once more demonstrated in a discussion about the future organisation of the

[1] *A Guide to Religions of America*, p. 273.

[2] The approximate nature of this classification can be seen from the fact that the category of urban manual labourers includes in addition to workers, domestics, firemen, and even policemen.

church and society. West German sociologist Dietrich von Oppen, an active participant in ecumenical discussion, writes that the creation of social pluralism means the transition from old, traditional organisations towards an organisational era in which institutional structures are combined with personal structures.

Von Oppen sees the substantiation for such a transition in the Bible, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, interpreted, of course, in the spirit of the time. In his opinion, the principles underlying this sermon have laid the groundwork for today's social regulations, the essence of which is the individual's personal responsibility to God. This transition, von Oppen believes, is "a process of secularization, of personalization, of mobilization; it is a movement toward the achievement of true manhood: 'You must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' ".[1]

As a result, society becomes, in his opinion, "open" and "elastic" and presents greater freedom to the individual than "sacral-institutional" orders do. A major part of man's life will take place beyond the control of society and will be fiilled with personal responsibility to God. "The organization differs strikingly from the older sacral order precisely in the direction indicated by the gospel itself. This may well mean that the gospel provided the motivation for the changes."[2]

[1] Dietrich von Oppen, "The Era of the Personal" in *Man in Community. . . .*, pp. 156-57.

[2] Ibid., p. 158.

The bourgeois-apologetic nature of von Oppen's ideas can be seen in his description of various types of organisations: clubs (personal association), enterprises, and the state. In his analysis, an enterprise, for instance, is a social "cooperative" of workers, engineers, managers, and owners of capitalist enterprises.

Von Oppen assigns the church a special place in the political organisation of modern capitalist society. According to von Oppen, the Christian community possesses all the features of an "organisation" (in his terminology—a higher form of organisation), loses its "sacral" nature and aquires a pluralist form.

Taking ideas like these as their point of departure, ecumenical theologians attempt to further develop their theory of organisation in its confessional and ecumenical application. The concepts of "organisation", "order" and "institution" were more tangibly defined within the framework of "the sociology of organisation" at the 1965 ecumenical consultation and at the Faith and Order Commission meetings in 1967 and 1971. Ecumenical publications have observed lately that these meetings provided "some clues regarding the usefulness of the concept of organization for an analysis of the Church".[1] Theologians have acknowledged that the concept of "order" cannot be interpreted as an unchanging condition (as it "traditionally has been interpreted unhistorically and statically") and have expressed the wish to make "order" a more functional concept applicable to a specific social situation.

[1] *Faith and Order, Louvain, 1971,* p. 131.

One of the preparatory documents for these meetings states that the concept of organisation is becoming increasingly important in the ecumenical analysis of church problems.

As ecumenists see it, organisation implies "goal-oriented" activity and includes the idea of "orientation within common-goal activity". Organisation also absorbs the "informal and unorganised processes" which accompany every formal system. That is why "church life" and "the church system" should not be seen as identical, and the formal system should be viewed as functional, as a means of attaining a goal.

During discussion of organisational problems, ecumenists tried to further define the meaning of certain theological concepts. At the Montreal Conference, theologians suggested distinguishing between "order" and "organisation". "Order" means a visible set of institutions necessary for the church's continuous existence as a historical community. "Organisation" means those "elements of institutionalism" which shape various aspects of the community established and maintained by the given "order".

In the subsequent analysis, these concepts were further defined within the framework of Western "organisational sociology". Keeping in mind existence of "organised" religious associations, as well as spontaneous activity by informal religious groups, ecumenists view "order" as the "equivalent of those elements in the set of means which are acknowledged by the members of the organization (or by groups

of members) as indispensable part of the set of goals and values."[1]

Ecumenists attempted to establish the relation between such secular notions as "institution", "establishment", and "organisation" and theological concepts as "koinonia" and the community of the "invisible and visible Church".

Koinonia means a community in which all elements of religious manifestation bind the believers together. Ecumenists believe that the division between establishment and koinonia is overcome in the church, in the community of the spirit. The church as an establishment creates an orderly system of life in general through which God transmits his love to man and ensures man's personal existence in freedom and responsibility. "Koinonia is at once fellowship with God and fellowship with men".[2]

Nonetheless, the participants in the ecumenical discussions did not succeed in linking an empirical sociological analysis to the theological tasks of ecclesiology—the teaching about the church. They were forced to admit that "in spite of several interesting applications of concepts from organizational sociology for the analysis of the Church, the ecclesiological implications of this way of conceptualization have still to be spelled out".[3]

An ecumenical analysis of the church's problems

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[1] *Faith and Order, Louvain, 1971*, pp. 126-29.
[2] Ibid., p. 111.
[3] Ibid., p. 131.

in light of bourgeois "organisational sociology" was also extended to inner processes that take place in religious communities and either assist or hinder religious unity. In particular, serious attention was given to the mechanism by which the inner unity of a religious organisation is ensured—the mechanism of "power" and "authority". Skilful use of this mechanism makes it possible to avoid or solve many organisational conflicts. Ecumenists recommend varying administrative forms for the religious communities.

The close link between the secular organisations of bourgeois society (state and non-state) and the church has already been pointed out. However, conflicts may occur in their relations, and this hinders Christian integration.

The growing crisis in confidence among the mass of believers has forced the church's leadership to give more serious attention to the community's internal organisation, for instance, the distribution of power. Ecumenical theologians claim that effective and "humane" administration of religious organisations can only be ensured through broad cooperation between believers, differentiation and specialisation of administrative functions, and personnel training. However, any noticeable democratisation of the ecclesiastical administration has not been observed as a result of unifying processes.

Theologians themselves admit this when they observe that believers *en masse* do not always favourably regard ecumenical contacts at the highest level.

And vice versa, higher church echelons disapprove of local churches' attempts to unite without their agreement.

Ecumenists are trying to overcome conflicts of this type, taking into consideration the interests of all levels of the religious community. "Control groups" were set up for study purposes in several communities with the aim of assessing the effect of external influences on the community and the reaction by community members to these influences. It transpired that the effect of such influences on ordinary members was entirely different from that on the community's leaders. Stronger ties between believers were attained in the "control groups" where racial, language, class, and other factors were taken into consideration.

Ecumenical discussion has also touched on problems in the church bureaucracy. In speaking of "bureaucracy", bourgeois sociologists mean a schematised and depersonalised administrative system which ensures efficient management of any organisation. However, the dehumanised influence of bourgeois social relations develops bureaucracy's negative sides turning it into a style of management which estranges administrative machinery from its goals. The administrative bodies of religious organisations have also not proven immune to this disease, and this has been reflected in ecumenical documents.

Bureaucracy, if this means continuous control, administrative foresight, and "reasonable order" stimulates the clear functioning of any organisation, in-

cluding religious ones. Yet these features of bureaucracy bring anonymity into inter-personal relations (and these are primary in any community), thus hindering the movement towards Christian integration. The bureaucracy tends to support and defend the interests of the ruling exploitative classes which it serves, tends to be interested in narrowly specialised tasks without taking broader interests into consideration. Bureaucracy tends towards oligarchical management and decision-making without participation by the majority or general agreement. Organisational success alone is regarded as the major criterion of social activity, thus encouraging the development of so-called "organisational society" and "the organisation man". This dual nature of the bureaucracy shows itself more clearly as computers and the mass media make greater inroads into management methods. That is why ecumenists regard bureaucracy as a "mixed blessing".

They observe that the ecclesiastical bureaucracy directly influences the process of Christian unification inasmuch as it often replaces the organisation's real goals with management needs and regulates minutely the behaviour of community members, thus turning the means into the goal. At the same time, ecumenists realise that church unity is impossible without efficient leadership.

The church, ecumenical theorists state, exists in the secular world and cannot function without organisational structures or without relying on power and authority. But it is important that the church should

not turn into a self-sustained body primarily interested in its own survival as an earthly organisation, for this would lead to loss of its uniqueness as a "transcendental phenomenon". The ideal is therefore to join ecclesiastical organisational structures to religious features of community—*koinonia*. "Organizational structures will always be necessary; at the same time we affirm that the unity of the Church is to be found not only in the merger of denominational structures but even more profoundly in the *koinonia* of true eucharistic worship, where the whole Catholic (i.e., universal—*Yu. K.*) Church is manifested."[1]

Inasmuch as the church is not only an organisation carrying out certain religious functions, but also a social reality, ecumenists have worked out a classification system for Christian organisations in order to better understand the process by which such organisations are formed. Sociologists have elaborated a typological approach which helps systematise the constantly growing body of knowledge about the subjects under study. Ecumenists have analysed the teaching of the noted bourgeois sociologist, Max Weber, about "ideal types", the classification system of Protestant theologian Ernst Troeltsch, and the typology elaborated by structure-functionalists (a leading school of bourgeois sociology today), among them

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[1] *Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order. Report of Section I, "The Church in the Purpose of God"*, WCC, Geneva, 1963, p. 5.

Joachim Wach, J. Milton Inger, and Howard Becker, and on the basis of this analysis have worked out a typology of religious organisational structure and a typology of religious leadership with a view to their suitability for WCC membership.

Traditional theologians adopt a purely formal approach to the question of religious classification. The confession which exists legally in a country and is the dominant religion for that country is regarded as a church. Religious groups which deviate from this church are termed sects. In bourgeois sociology classification of religious organisations and the terminology to go along with it have undergone certain changes, but the general approach remained the same.

Max Weber's "ideal type" is a purely speculative outline. While recognising the usefulness of his "ideal types" for the classification of religious organisations, ecumenical theologians stipulate that they are somewhat arbitrary in their oversimplification of the data, ignoring partial differences in order to stress what are seen as significant similarities. These "types" are models built up in the mind of the researcher, and not comprehensive definitions of religious or social realities.

The basis of Weber-Troeltsch's typology was the tradition mentioned above: all religious organisations are reduced to "churches" and "sects". According to this division, "the former is a group strongly inclined toward universality and institutionalization; the latter, a group that accepts the fact it is small

and tends toward primary contacts and face-to-face relations".[1]

Bourgeois sociologists subsequently proposed other classifications which would take account of the changes which have taken place in religious organisations. Joachim Watch has distinguished between "churches" and "denominations", "sects" and other smaller groups. American sociologist Howard Becker has replaced the "ideal type" with the "construed type". This latter should carry out the function of systematising facts so that a single example can be used to disclose with a high degree of probability what can be expected in similar situations. Becker tried to deal with the organisational structure and the mode of behaviour that can be expected of a religious community. To the types already mentioned he added "denomination" and "cult". Becker characterised a "denomination" as a "sect" at a high stage of development, and a "cult" as an ephemeral group that has grown up around a charismatic religious leader.[2]

Ecumenists are especially impressed by this functional-formalised approach to religious typology. They believe that Becker's typology could be useful

[1] *Modern Sociological Theory in Continuity and Change.* Ed. by Howard Becker and Alvin Boskoff. The Dryden Press, New York, 1957, p. 470.

[2] Charisma—the endowment of people with supernatural "divine gifts": the gift of "speech", of "foeign tongues", "healing powers", etc. Marx Weber defines charisma as a trait distinguishing a person from ordinary people (see Marx Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization,* OUP, New York, 1947, pp. 358-59).

to show changeable elements in society. The typology recognises that transition from one type to another is possible in the relationship between church and society, e. g., transition from a sect to a church. From their point of view, this functional approach is not value-oriented, but simply serves for purposes of interpretation.

However, despite their common approach, ecumenists have not totally adopted the typology advanced by bourgeois sociologists, for they have came into contact with a wide variety of religious organisations. Theologians assert that, from the ecumenical point of view, a more impartial definition of "ideal types" must be elaborated because some small religious groups termed "sects" by sociologists are WCC members.

Because various types of religious communities are drawn into the sphere of Christian integration, ecumenists have made their classification systems more concrete for utilitarian purposes. Ecumenists set out two fundamental types of organisation: "associations" (Baptist organisations are taken as a model of this type of organisation) and "corporations" (the Anglican Church is a model of this type). The former, as ecumenists see it, is a less centralised organisation and possesses fewer sanctions for the local organisations. Nonetheless, ecumenists give preference to the associative type of organisation, inasmuch as no one member of the WCC can force its own norms and goals on other members. In this connection, it should be mentioned that Baptist leaders have noticed changes

in their confession's organisational structure. Formerly, they stressed each community's independence as a congregation. It was believed that each community was an embodiment of the whole church, the integrity of church membership (*koinonia's* authenticity) and its relations with divine reality. At present the congregational principle is complemented by the communities' internal dependence on each other ("associative" and "corporate"). "The independence appeared in each church's freedom to determine its own ministry and discipline."[1]

The same principle, conditioned by the tasks of Christian integration, forms the basis for the ecumenical classification of types of religious leadership. Theologians refer to Max Weber's typology here, too, with Weber's ideas serving as an example of cooperation between bourgeois secular and religious sociology. Weber examined the types of religious leadership using as his point of departure the functions of the individual in religious life. He set out three types of leadership and corresponding forms of obedience.

The first type is the "charismatic" leader, who usually initiates mystical or sectarian movement. His followers believe that their leader possesses supernatural powers, the divine gift of prophecy, foresight, etc.

The second type is the "traditional" leader, whose power and authority rest on age-old customs linked with genealogical rights.

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[1] *Study Materials of the 11th Baptist World Congress*, Baptist World Alliance, Washington, 1965, pp. 38-39.

The third is a "bureaucratic" leader, who attains his position of leadership according to his organisation's rules.

Weber also described the process by which charisma becomes an inherited trait, as a result of which a form of traditional leadership emerges and the charismatic group becomes so large that bureaucratisation becomes inevitable.

The last process (charisma becomes routine) is of special interest to ecumenists. Attempting to reconcile different traditions and styles of ecclesiastical leadership, they distinguish between the first-generation "charismatic" leader when a group was established and the leaders in later generations, who have consolidated the power protecting their organisation.

Theologians believe that the research methods used for this process are applicable to an analysis of the churches' participation in ecumenical organisations like the WCC. Ecumenists want to know how keenly individual churches sense their individuality in relation to their participation in the ecumenical movement, to what degree individual churches are ready to be part of a broader organisational system, what influence an institution's prestige has on integration, and so forth. Apparently both extreme confessionalism, and extreme religious federation are unacceptable to ecumenism.

Ecumenists oppose the notions of "differences" and "divisions": they acknowledge the legitimacy of differences in church life, but condemn divisions in the church. The Evanston Assembly affirmed that dif-

ferences exist which are not sinful, but beneficial because they reflect differences in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as differences in the Maker's creation. When differences disrupt unity, however, their quality alters and they become sinful division.

Based on this notion then, the existence of various types of religious organisations is accepted as a natural reflection of different "socio-cultural factors". Ecumenists came to the conclusion that "a high degree of self-awareness" and readiness to accept the need for renewal are needed to evaluate comprehensively factors influencing the formation of a religious organisation.

Ecumenical theorists deal with concrete questions concerning unification of the Christian churches, examine individual stages of the integration process, make administrative preparations for unification, and deal wih other specific points in establishing a religious organisation.

Efforts by bourgeois sociologists and theologians to improve bourgeois public organisations, including religious ones, cannot turn the system of capitalist exploitation into an organised, harmonious system, although sometimes a certain temporary stability can be achieved. The introduction of new leadership methods and organisational principles cannot eliminate the antagonistic contradictions inherent in capitalist society.

Ecumenical "organisational sociology" performs an apologetic ideological function, the essence of which consists in substantiating the eternal nature

of the church which, in the ecumenical view, can exists in various social forms.

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Ecumenical theologians also draw on other bourgeois sociological concepts. Published social research data on the migration process, relations between the individual and the group, leisure time, and other matters are examined in ecumenical documents from the point of view of consolidating the church's position and influence. Theologians, for instance, attentively follow the international labour migration process. They devote special attention to the workers' confessional adherence, and the methods of drawing them into religious organisations.[1]

Broad use is also made, for the purposes of modernising religion, of facts which have emerged from public opinion polls, the results of which are printed and analysed in ecumenical publications.[2]

Ecumenists readily turn to "inter-disciplinary" research on social problems in Christianity today. However, they insist on the leading role of theological theory. The difference between theology and sociology is regarded as only one of perspective, orientation, and interests, not as result of different objects of research. Nonetheless, both theologians and sociologists speak of the church as a social institution and an em-

[1] *Migration Today, Current Problems and Christian Responsibility*, No. 15, 1970, pp. 64-66.

[2] *Yearbook of American Churches*, WCC, New York, 1970-78.

pirical phenomenon. "The mode of cooperation between sociology and theology was interpreted as interaction...,"[1] stated the participants in the Louvain consultation.

The empirical data on various aspects of the church's position in modern capitalist society need to be interpreted theoretically. Bourgeois sociologists have offered their services for this task: endowing empirical data with theological significance. Theologians stress religion's "pneumatological" aspect, claiming that the Holy Spirit acts in all spheres of public life: "The Holy Spirit is God at His most empirical...."

In order to strengthen the cooperation between bourgeois sociology and theology, the participants in the ecumenical conferences plan to solve a number of problems in the future. Firstly, the creation of an "integrated language for theology and sociology". Secondly, the choice of general research areas.

The concepts of "order", "organisation", "institution", "institutionalisation", and so on have been adopted as starting points in the current apologetic analysis of bourgeois society.

Joint research has made use of phenomena important for a definition of the church's social reality and which can be subjected to empirical sociological analysis. Ecumenical theologians then go on to link the results of this analysis with theologically meaningful concepts. For one, the importance of studying the problems of "protest" and "unity" is pointed out.

[1] *Faith and Order, Louvain, 1971*, p. 123.

The choice of the problem of "unity" was, of course, conditioned by the tasks of the ecumenical movement. Ecumenists stated that in elaborating this theme they proposed to concentrate on "the organizational aspects of re-union, that is, by studying examples of the coming-together or attempted coming-together of churchly bodies".[1] Research of this type, in the opinion of modern theologians, will help increase the interaction between theology and sociology and establish the practice of "mutual questioning and answering".

The cooperation between theology and bourgeois sociology is closely connected with the ideological struggle today. Bourgeois theorists and pro-Western ecumenical circles have joined forces to overcome the increasing influence of scientific Marxist-Leninist theory. Nonetheless, differences of opinion between theology and secular bourgeois sociology remain, and the contradictions between social reality and the church's activity are deepening. All this adds to the problems facing ecumenism.

However, the greatest problems arise for ecumenical theorists during integration of various tendencies in Christian theology which, from a barrier between the confessions, they attempt to turn into a link that would serve as an ideological catalyst in the unification process and a theoretical basis for participation by a united Christian Church in the contemporary struggle of ideas.

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[1] *Faith and Order, Louvain,* 1971, p. 125.

III

ECUMENISM FACED WITH THEOLOGICAL CRISIS

A broad range of problems connected with the intensifying ideological-political crisis in the capitalist system is reflected in today's religious concepts. The way in which they are reflected is highly complex, however.

Ecumenical theological discussions on religious problems show their social content. Theological circles admit the church's increasing awareness of the religious crisis in the modern world and, as a result, the need to re-examine basic theological concepts and principles and to adapt them to modern life.

Ecumenical theologians are re-thinking certain religious postulates and, at the same time, defending traditional theological ideas. Their chief task is to create a "unified" theology, a kind of theoretical platform to unite the Christian churches. However, given the general religious crisis, these attempts hardly promise any success. Nonetheless, the influense of religious ideas in their ecumenical interpretation is growing, partly owing to the technical means for propaganda in bourgeois society.

The emergence of the WCC did not lead to the

elimination of confessional differences between the religious organisations which make up the WCC, but the integrative processes in church life produced a corresponding change in theological research.

Representatives of the largest Protestant group, the Baptists, have described this change thus: "The shift represents a movement from the sectarian to the catholic approach in relation to the Scriptures. This is a change not only on the part of Baptists, but of nearly all Christian theologians at the present time." To be even more precise, a leading Baptist theologian, G. R. Beasley-Murray, said: "I have striven to interpret the evidence of the New Testament as a Christian scholar, rather than a member of a particular Christian confession."[1]

We should point out the relative nature of the term "ecumenical theology" as used by some theologians. WCC theology is made up of confessional doctrines with a universal Christian singificance. The ecumenical movement itself, however, as its leaders stress, has no theology of its own. The WCC bodies support and encourage integrative processes in the theological sphere, as well as advocating them in the decisions adopted by the various ecumenical conferences and meetings.

Ecumenical theologians are re-examining theological concepts, formed predominantly under Protestant influence, in the light of the Orthodox Christian

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[1] *Study Materials of the 11th Baptist World Congress*, pp. 34-35.

tradition.[1] WCC theorists have had to allow various interpretations of theological concepts and problems in different ecumenical organisations. This creates a distinctive and contradictory theological situation in the ecumenical movement.

The process of elaborating an ecumenical theological credo at inter-confessional meetings was extremely complex. Many ecumenical leaders believe that this should be achieved through "ecumenical consensus". Other theologians, referring to the history of Christianity, point out that the major theological systems have been created as a result of differentiation among the churches, not as a result of their integration: "The history of Christian thought indicates that great theology is stimulated more by divisiveness and conflict than by unification and harmony."[2]

Ecumenists put under discussion the fundamental problems in Christian doctrine: general ecclesiology (the theological teaching about the church), biblical exegetics (a branch of theology concerned with interpretation of the Bible) and hermeneutics (the teach-

[1] In his "Address on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Leningrad Theological Academy", Metropolitan Nikodim characterised the ecumenical tendencies in Orthodox theology and stressed the need "to understand the Western confessions and evaluate them from the point of view of genuine Orthodoxy as it existed when the church in the East and West was one" (see *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 3, 1977, p. 14).

[2] *The Christian Century*, No. 43, October 1961, p. 1269.

ing about the principles underlying scriptural interpretation), religious-secular traditions, the relationship between scriptures and legends, and the relationship between various aspects of faith (soteriological, Christological, and eschatological). The general methodological questions of theology are also being examined. The materials issued by the Fifth WCC Assembly (Nairobi, 1975) stress that "Christians need to reappraise carefully their standards of biblical and theological literacy, which may be inadequate for responsible Christian life in modern society".[1]

As a result of the growing influence of hermeneutics in modern Western philosophy, ecumenical theologians are actively trying to use its postulates for theological ends.

Participants in the ecumenical discussion have also suggested other ways of solving the crisis in theology today. This includes, for one, attempts to reconcile fideism with a positivist interpretation of experience and with the postulates of the latest analytical philosophy.

The prominent analytical theologian, John Macquarrie, believes that the basic fault in ecumenical discussion is incorrect use of language and defence of the idea that "falsification" principles cannot be applied to religious theories. The multiplicity of meanings for the terms used by the ecumenists turns them, in his opinion, into signs in a code language, which

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[1] *Fifth Assembly of the WCC. Section IV*, WCC, Geneva, 1975, p. 2.

can only lead to misunderstandings with opponents.

The ecumenical press has published appeals for a "situational" and "contextual" approach to theology. Ecumenists link a situational analysis with existentialist philosophy. They are especially impressed in this respect by the view of Protestant theologian Paul Tillich, who believes that "true theology arises where a question in the situation asks for an answer from the *message*", i.e., a "situational theology" comes into being.[1]

An appeal was issued at the WCC Assembly in Nairobi to effect "contextualisation of theology", i. e., to study its problems "starting consciously with the immediate context, and then, through theological reflection, relating it to a wider context".[2]

The "contextual" tendency, in the view of ecumenists, will make it possible to create an "applied theology" as opposed to "pure theology", the principles of which were elaborated by traditional dogmatics. The applied nature of "contextual" theology enables it to be used in solving the basic problems facing humanity: the nuclear threat, population control, and environmental pollution, for instance. In this way, theologians reason, "contextualism" would make it possible to link theological solutions and analytical

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[1] Joseph Fletcher, "Anglican Theology and the Ethics of Natural Law", in *Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World*, p. 328.

[2] *Uppsala to Nairobi*, p. 88.

data, and to bring theological categories into conformity with the context of specific situations.[1]

Examination of these questions by ecumenists logically develops into a discussion of world problems, a further step in the churches' activity to modernise their doctrines.

WCC theorists are concerned to discuss and solve problems that are world-wide and historical in nature. They hope to create a mechanism for theologically and ethically influencing the elaboration of problems relating to the whole world and demanding a joint effort by all mankind, as well as influencing international secular and religious organisations.

1. THEOLOGY AND GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Global problems have become the object of fierce ideological struggle in recent years. The result of ecumenists' attempts to solve global developmental problems has been an attempt to revive the basic postulates of traditional theological concepts: predestination, creationism, prophetism, eschatology, and so forth, which, however, are clothed in "scientific" form and fitted out with terminology from modern philosophy,

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[1] A. Dyson, "Dogmatic or Contextual Theology?" in *Study Encounter*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1972. At a meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Bangalore (1978) attemps were made to apply the "contextualisation" principles to an analysis of such theological concepts as "unity", "tradition", "authority" and others (*The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No 1, 1979, pp. 5-93).

sociology, and anthropology. Ecumenists believe that this approach should help to strengthen theology's "applied" nature. All this was reflected in the materials issued by the Fifth WCC Assembly (Nairobi, 1975), and especially by the World Conference on Faith, Science, and the Future held in 1979 at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as at other ecumenical forums. Ecumenical theorists concentrate primarily on a theological and ethical appraisal of the role of science and technology in development, on ecology and natural resources, peace and disarmament, and other global problems whose topicality was pointed out in an official WCC document containing a forecast of social change in the 1980s.[1] Other problems affecting all mankind (demographical, health care, etc.) are also being studied in this context.

The views held by ecumenical theorists on the role of science and technology in development and their influence on social change have undergone a certain evolution. From admitting the possible application of some technological achievements in the interests of mankind, pro-Western ecumenists have turned to attempts to work out world-wide "scientific" models for social development based on modern bourgeois views of the historical process interpreted in a theist spirit.

The First WCC Assembly (1948) expressed the opinion that "technology's non-directional develop-

[1] "Into the 1980s: Some Ecumenical Views on the Challenge of Values and Structures" in *Ecumenism and a New World Order: the Failure of the 1970s and the Challenges of the 1980s,* p. 54.

ment" brings about certain unforeseen changes in society. As a result, the idea of a "responsible society" was advanced. The World Conference on Church and Society (1966) announced the appearance of the new man, "a new type of human being" resulting from the development of science and technology. Two years later, the Fourth WCC Assembly in Uppsala issued an appeal for the world's rapid development by transferring scientific and technological achievements from "the rich to the poor nations". The 1974 World Conference on Science and Technology for Human Development proclaimed the need to create a social mechanism that would put science and technology at the service of "social justice at all levels". Participants in the Fifth Assembly in Nairobi (1975) came to the conclusion that the churches should extend their research and increase their practical actions to meet the challenge of an upsurge in modern science and technology. The Assembly's documents read: "The responsibility that now confronts humanity is to make a deliberate transition to a sustainable global society in which science and technology will be mobilized to meet the basic physical and spiritual needs of people, to minimize human suffering and to create an environment which can sustain a decent quality of life for all people. This will involve a radical transformation of civilization, new technologies, new uses for technology and new global economic and political systems."[1]

[1] "Integrating the Two Revolutions of Our Time" in *Anticipation*, No. 22, May 1976, p. 5.

Ecumenists adopted recommendations on the need to extend "inter-disciplinary" research by theologians and scientists into technological development and its impact on society's future demographically, ecologically, and energetically. In theologians' opinion, the present moment requires the elaboration of new theological and religious-sociological concepts.

The prospects for historical development were actively discussed at the ecumenical Conference on Faith, Science, and the Future (1979) held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The very range of participants in the conference was interesting. Western researchers in the natural sciences and sociologists with positivist and theist views helped ecumenical theologians to substantiate modern fideism. While only eight scientists took part in the ecumenical Conference on Church and Society (Geneva, 1966), scientists made up nearly half of all the participants at the MIT Conference. There were nine hundred participants in all at the conference. Ecumenical theologians admitted that they were stunned by the large numbers of "new priests of our time" (thus ecumenists termed scholars and engineers). Theologians see this as a triumphant proof of an important shift in science towards theology, and Philip Potter underscores the special role played by the ecumenical movement in this shift: "You have been accustomed to clergy posing as pundits on all human questions and dilemmas. The laity have been regarded as recipients of their wisdom, not as partners in the search for truth in God's world. The

curious thing is that, whenever clergy have felt unable to cope with issues put before them, they are very apt to say: 'I am only a layman on this matter'.... We are, of course, also saying that on matters of theological and ecclesiastical importance we are the authorities and lay people are ignorant and unable to make a significant contribution. Nevertheless, thanks to the ecumenical movement, we have learned that laos, laity, means the whole people of God.... We have all come here to deliberate together on the central realities of our existence—God, humanity and creation and the inextricable relations between them."[1]

However, Dr. Potter cannot ignore the historical facts of the struggle between science and religion, and its influence on man's fate, placing responsibility for this on science, for the most part. In his opinion, the churches today calmly accept the reality of science and technology and are only concerned when a threat to mankind arises—as, for instance, after the explosion of the atomic bomb in 1945, or the threat posed by the incorrect application of atomic energy or gene engineering. Moreover, he claims, "the application of scientific methods to the criticism of the Bible has helped to bring about a more tolerant attitude towards science", and scientific enquiry is "in the spirit of the biblical message that humanity is called to fulfill the mandate given by God to comprehend and

[1] Philip Potter, "Science and Technology: Why Are the Churches Concerned?" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, 1979, pp. 343-44.

master creation, to bring the unbridled forces of nature under human control", and all this is for the well-being of all. "During this century Christians have learned a great deal from science and scientists...; the commonwealth of science which knows no national or ideological frontiers and in which there is a mutual sharing of ideas and discoveries and mutual correction where wrong or false turnings in research have been detected."[1]

After the ecumenical forum in July 1979, WCC representatives (Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios and Paul Abrecht, leaders of MIT Conference) took part in the UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development (Vienna, August 1979). Their statement pointed out the common approach to today's global problems by the UN Conference and the WCC Conference. The ecumenists stated their support for the work of international governmental organisations and expressed the hope that these resolutions would serve the development of science and technology and mankind's future.

However, they also defended the right to religious and ethical control over the development of science and technology and other matters of world concern.[2]

It is noteworthy that SODEPAX issued a special publication containing an appraisal of the problems

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[1] Ibidem.

[2] "Statement by Representatives of the WCC to the UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development, Vienna, August 1979" in *Anticipation,* No. 27, 1980, pp. 41-42.

discussed at the Special UN Conference in Vienna and at the MIT Conference, both by representatives of the WCC and the Vatican. These documents show the "profound concern of the Churches for a harmonization of technology and development with the cultures, aspirations and spiritual values of the peoples of our planet".[1]

Ecumenists examine the relations between faith and science in the context of a religious programme for movement towards "a just society". "Any attempt to articulate afresh a doctrine of creation and of humanity must be done in the context both of God's revelation in history and of the actualities and longings of creation and humanity in history."[2] One of the central theoretical and methodological principles at the basis of models of the future is the affirmation of complete "mutual understanding between science and faith" today and their partnership in determining the prospects for historical development. This theoretical principle should, in their opinion, be transformed into practical actions by the ecumenical movement, which claims the right to decide mankind's fate. "The ecumenical movement, which is concerned about the purpose of God for the *oikoumene*, the world of human beings, has concentrated its attention on what kind of world of human beings is compatible with the gospel of the Kingdom of God

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[1] *Church Alert*. The SODEPAX Newsletter, No. 26, January-March 1980, p. 1.

[2] Philip Potter, "Science and Technology. . . .", p. 347.

and his justice."[1] Participants in the ecumenical discussion have tried to substantiate the need to strengthen the influence of science and religion today on social development and control over forecasting this development. A general approach did not exclude, however, some difference in argumentation. Thus, the Australian astronomer, Robert H. Brown, sought to reconcile the objective truth of scientific knowledge and the transcendental. He describes the nature of science as a form of social activity through which men attempt to disclose and understand the world of nature. Science helps us understand the world "as it really is", writes Brown.[2] He describes the eternal conflict between faith and knowledge as the result of misunderstanding, or a lack of mutual understanding. In his opinion scientists, elated by scientific achievements, have lost sight of the transcendental, while religious theorists, in their turn, "have confused symbolical ideas", inherited from the past, with reality and have intruded into the sphere of knowledge. Today, Brown says, all this is left behind and the only obstacle to unity of faith and reason is the claim that a unified scientific vision of the world does not leave room for the supernatural and excludes the existence of the transcendental. To substantiate the possibility of an alliance between science and religion he points out the limitations of knowledge, the concepts of

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[1] Ibid., p. 345.

[2] Robert H. Brown, "The Nature of Science" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p. 356.

which are supposedly only symbols of profound transcendental entities.

Brown states: "It is true . . . that science does remove minor mysteries, such as the mechanism of heredity, but in doing so it shows us where the major mysteries really are. . . .Our scientific knowledge is based on abstractions which we choose to make from a more complex, essentially mysterious, reality. All our ideas about the world, about time, space, fundamental particles, light and so on, are therefore symbolic entities which are themselves mysterious."[1] As for the great mysteries, for instance, the origin and meaning of the world, science is helpless to answer these questions, they are within the competence of religion. "The mystery of Creation is intact, pushed back by 20 billion years, but, nevertheless, where it always was—in the beginning. Nor has science anything to say about the purpose of the world. . . . In brief, everything we know is bounded by mysteries. Science relates us to these mysteries impersonally through objective knowledge; art and religion relate us to them personally through beauty, meaning, and purpose. Thus in the domain of science, as the critics rightly point out, there is no room for the supernatural; the natural is mysterious enough."[2]

Brown tries to prove that a scientific vision of the world it not the only one and that it should be complemented by a religious interpretation of reality. "It seems that there are many things, perhaps everything,

[1] Robert H. Brown, Op. cit., p. 363.

[2] Ibidem.

which cannot be understood from one point of view. It is therefore essential to explore other points of view but, as science tells us, it is equally important to realize that every point of view has a limited domain of validity. Finally, I suggest that we should accept the pursuit of science as a moral duty. To regard it as an enemy of faith is to live in the last century. Not only is it essential to making a better world, but it is a dynamic revelation of the marvellous and mysterious world in which we live."[1]

Brown's stance met with full support from bourgeois-clerical circles. The American political scientist, Alan Geyer, Executive Director of the Centre for Theology and Public Policy in Washington, observed that Robert Brown "made a notably eloquent appeal for a new vision of science as a partner with theology in affirming the unity of humanity and nature, the role of imagination and symbolism, and the mysteries of Creation itself".[2]

Brown's ideas have been actively supported by the English specialist on the history and philosophy of science, Dr. Jerome R. Ravetz, who observed that science should not make any claims to have a monopoly on truth, inasmuch as science without religious faith cannot evaluate the future correctly. "If we understand 'faith' as an awareness of a realm beyond that of sense—data and logic, a realm which gives

[1] Ibidem.

[2] Alan Geyer, "The EST Complex at MIT. The Ecumenical-Scientific-Technological Complex" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p. 373.

our lives their particular meaning and value, then 'faith' is firmly back on the agenda of discussions of science. . . .The scale and complexity of the problems are so great that human reason alone will not conquer them; it is here that faith comes in as the link between science and the future."[1] Ravetz, in turn, has been supported by Professor David J. Rose, a nuclear physicist at MIT, who, in reviving and strengthening creationist ideas, sees science as a means of interpreting divine creation. He writes: "Such knowledge is good, in the sense that France of Assisi spoke of loving a rock—not worshipping but loving, because God made it; so I look at science, which gives some insight into how creation works. . . .What I had really discovered was one more tiny bit of the wondrous complexity of God's creation."[2]

Rose also criticises from a creationist point of view the myth, widespread in the West, of "pure science", which supposedly leads to independent truth. As history shows, science provides a growing number of useful empirical facts and a growing number of conceptual models into which these facts fit; if science is exact, then we can forecast what will happen given the growing volume of statistics. Thus,

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[1] Jerome R. Ravetz, "Science and Technology as Promise and Threat. The Scale and Complexity of the Problem" in *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p.371.

[2] David J. Rose, "Faith, Science, Technology, Stewardship" in *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXXI, No, 2, 1979, p. 179.

Einstein's theory of relativity went further than the classical mechanics which dominated until the late 19th century, but it did not make the older laws outmoded—they were a good approximation, within a limited framework, for descriptions of real phenomena. It is very probable that in the future the theory of relativity will be seen as a part of an even greater whole. To Rose, such a concept of science, as a part of the "created" whole, leads to a more precise definition of the foundations of science, including the theological basis.

Science's total inability to explain the whole of "creation" leads some people to reject science as a useful branch of knowledge. This conclusion is mistaken, Rose claims. Complemented by philosophical theism, science should provide a true reflection of the world.

The role played by technology in social development is analysed from the same position, reflecting the negative consequences of technological progress under capitalism. Ecumenists see technology as a useful and desirable application of science, and people can use technology to "move towards either heaven or hell".

Ecumenical theorists today are focusing attention on such global problems as: (1) scientists' responsibility for the results of the application of science and technology; (2) social regulation of social development. They stress that the developmental tendencies of science and technology "are posing acute ethical questions to the churches and theologians, whose tra-

ditional categories of thinking are hardly adequate for such an enterprise".[1]

Theologians hope to correct this situation by inflating the stimulating role played by the religious perception of life. By influencing the minds of believers, including scientists, and their moral precepts, they wish to regulate and direct science and technology for developmental purposes.

Responsibility is seen in its following aspects: responsibility to one's neighbour in space, for instance, to people living on other continents, and to one's neighbour in time, to the following generations. Finding a solution to these problems joins together theologians and secular experts on science and technology, in the opinion of ecumenists. All this, they believe, strengthens the ideological aspect of science and enhances scientists' social and ethical responsibility.

Ecumenists link a fundamental solution to the problems of responsibility and regulation to Christian faith. "Faith is first of all a call to repentance, metanoia, the radical change of our thinking and outlook, of our style of life and, indeed, of our whole being towards God in Christ.... To have faith is to hope and to act in hope through love. Such faith, hope and love liberate us to struggle for a just, participatory and sustainable society," wrote Philip Potter, General Secretary of the WCC Central Committee.[2]

At the WCC Nairobi Assembly ecumenists tried

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[1] Philip Potter "Science and Technology....", p. 345.
[2] Ibid., p. 351.

to put under discussion questions concerning relations between the two revolutions: the social revolution "created by the demand for social justice and liberation", and the technological revolution, "produced by the dynamics of rapid scientific and technological change and the increasing social uncertainty and confusion to which it leads". The consequences of these changes, in their opinion, should be reflected in "the new theological and ethical dimension of the human problem revealed by the uncertainty about the right use of modern science and technology".[1]

Which is the right view of the relationship between the technological and social revolution today from the point of view of ecumencial theorists? Do they enhance one another? Theologians sought to even predict an integration of the two revolutions, but in the final analysis they concluded that they were relatively independent of each other.

Ecumenists link regulation of social development with the "correct" interpretation of science and technology. In their opinion, modern science and technology have their own ideological dynamics which bring about corruption and technocracy regardless of the social system in which they operate: ". . .The real enemy is 'the technocracy', which no particular social system or ideology, left or right, has succeeded in controlling. From this perspective it is the traditional debate about capitalism and socialism which is

[1] "Integrating the Two Revolutions of Our Time", in *Anticipation*, No. 22, p. 3.

in danger of dealing with the symptoms rather than the realities of our age."[1]

Ideas of this type were developed further by an active participant in ecumenical discussions, Professor Charles Birch, in response to criticism from representatives of the developing countries of concepts advanced by pro-Western ecumenists. These critics noted that their countries did not suffer from an excess of technology, but from the partial or total lack of high quality technology needed for the development of their countries. They accused the West of "using the technology and ecology as a smoke screen for maintaining their own technological superiority".[2]

Charles Birch urged the "poor" developing countries to make demands on the "rich" countries for justice's sake and even outlined general demands, for the most part, ecological ones, which man can make on the earth and its resources. In his opinion, modern science is based on certain theological illusions and "poor theology" results in "poor science". The problem, then, is how to create a "new theology", a "new dimension" to mankind's ethical problems which, on the basis of Christian eschatology, would create a deeper understanding of responsibility.

However, ecumenical documents attest to very little success in creating a single theological system as a basis for social development. Although there was a special section at the MIT Conference and partici-

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[1] "Integrating the Two Revolutions. . . .", p. 4.
[2] Ibidem.

pants in the section sought to find a path to formulating a Christian social ethic and the churches' social policy at the present time, this task proved too difficult. It was decided to further elaborate a "theology of nature" and a "theology of technology". A Special Resolution adopted by the MIT Conference on Humanity, Nature and God recommended carrying out joint discussions between theologians and scientists—specialists in the natural and social sciences—on ecological and futurological subjects, and to draw as many people as possible into formulating an attitude towards science and technology and working out ethical appraisals of various scientific disciplines.

"To support and broaden this discussion we appeal to the member churches of the WCC to promote study and action on these problems by (a) engaging scientists and technologists in consideration of the ethical foundations of their work, and (b) training pastors to give theological and administrative leadership to their congregations in understanding these problems and implementing study and action on them."[1]

In connection with this, various measures were recommended to further integrate theology and the natural and social sciences, as well as strengthening the struggle against materialist, atheist views. It was recommended that the WCC elaborate: "(1) a series of theologically-based papers to parallel the fine presentations we have had from the side of science and

[1] "Humanity, Nature and God" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p. 416.

technology; as many of the scientists made their fundamental world-view and their technical work accessible to non-specialists, so the theological papers should make theology understandable in scientific circles; (2) a series of papers correcting the superficial accounts of the enmity of science and faith, which dominate textbooks and popular understanding in many countries, and displaying the more profound relations that actually exist between them."[1]

The noted biologist, A. Peacocke (a participant in ecumenical discussions) focused attention on this in his report about the MIT Conference published in *Nature*. He stressed the importance of joint discussion of global problems by scientists and theologians, which would lead to a stronger union between faith and science and their influence on mankind's destinies. Peacocke wrote that the greatest success of this "unique conference" was not its numerous resolutions and reports, but the very fact that "it was held at all—and in MIT". In his words: "The relation of the Christian churches to modern science and technology can never be quite the same again."[2]

In their appraisal of the development of science and technology, ecumenical theorists basically lean towards anti-technocratic positions in bourgeois social thought. They see the main source of social conflicts and injustice in "technocracy" which, in their opinion, is an inevitable side-effect of technological progress

[1] "Humanity, Nature and God", p. 416.

[2] A. Peacocke, "Scientists and Clergy Debate Global Problems" in *Anticipation*, No. 27, p. 21.

in any social and economic system. Ecumenical theorists see the chief means for overcoming conflict as a partnership between science and religion and the creation of new theological thought which would ensure the responsibility of scientists and politicians for a just resolution to all problems and humane regulation of social development. In essence, they are speaking of new theological methods for discrediting science's social functions and new ways of subordinating it to religious concepts. This approach is also typical of the treatment of ecological problems.

Today's ecological situation has posed before mankind a great many global problems connected with the social-historical process. In recent years, especially after the WCC Fifth Assembly (1975), discussion of these problems achieved great importance in ecumenical circles. Ecumenical documents came to be influenced by such widely-known "models" of the future as "the limits to growth", as defined by a research group headed by Donella Meadows, and the third project of The Club of Rome, "Reshaping the International Order" by Jan Tinbergen (a participant in ecumenical discussions).[1] A variety of approaches could be noted in ecumenical circles to ecological problems, reflecting both traditional Christian concepts and attempts to fuse them with modern scien-

[1] *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p. 348; Vol XXXI, No. 2, p. 182; "Into the 1980s: Some Ecumenical Views on the Challenge of Values and Structures" in *Ecumenism and a New World Order: the Failure of the 1970s and the Challenges of the 1980s,* p. 95.

tific notions. German theologian Gerhard Liedke has sought to defend the traditional point of view. He speaks of the sharp separation of man and nature and their conflict "after the fall". Harmony can only be re-established, in his opinion, in the future as an eschatological goal, although men should defend the weaker creatures from excessive exploitation. Some participants in the MIT Conference developed concepts of "stewardship and responsible care for nature", they occupied "a position intermediate between domination and harmony" and pointed out "the value of every creature to God, and the obligation to preserve nature even apart from its usefulness to humanity".[1] Representatives from the less developed countries who participated in the discussion stated the priority of human needs and stressed that poverty and hunger in some areas of the world had not yet attracted sufficient attention from the ecumenical movement, that gene engineering and its associated problems were not as important as agricultural or medical problems. Ecumenists place the blame for the separation of man and nature on a one-sided interpretation of biblical precepts and a utilitarian approach on the part of science and technology. The overcoming of this separation would lead to greater attention being devoted to ecological problems.

Professor David Rose even tried to provide a supposedly ecological basis for ecumenism, insofar as

[1] Ian G. Barbour, "Justice, Participation and Sustainability at MIT" in *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p. 382.

they both share a common object of study. The world—*oikoumene*—is viewed as an "ecosystem". Therefore scientists and theologians supposedly search for solutions to the same problems.[1]

The fullest ecumenical substantiation for ecology and its role in social development has been provided in the writings of noted ecumenist André Dumas and Professor Charles Birch. According to the ecumenists, Birch offered a new approach to the question of the relationship between man and nature and formulated the notion of "ecotheology", enlisting "poetry and scripture to counter the prevalent 'physicalist, technocratic image of nature and man' and to promote an integral ecological perspective".[2] Birch believes that mankind cannot carry out the biblical behest to fill the earth, inasmuch as man's enormous, ever-growing influence on the environment has to entail heavy consequences for both mankind and all creation. Birch observes that the "rich" and "poor" countries exert a different influence on the environment.

Nonetheless, the symptoms of ecological crisis typical of capitalism are transferred to the world as a whole, without any distinction between opposing social systems. One suggestion has been to slow down economic development, especially in the industrial sector of the developed countries, as a way out of this crisis. "There is no chance of the poor countries developing adequately unless the rich countries reduce

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[1] David J. Rose, Op. cit., p. 182.
[2] Alan Geyer, Op. cit., pp. 373-74.

the huge proportion they contribute to the total impact. This involves a programme of de-development of the rich world. The rich must live more simply that the poor may simply live.... According to the criterion of justice any country would be over-developed whose standard of living was beyond the capacity of the world to generate for all its peoples. This is a revolutionary ethical concept."[1] Birch sees a way out of the crisis in the need to complement purely technological means by religious and ethical norms; like most ecumenists, he treats this question in a liberal-reformist, basically utopian light, without any attempt at a concrete, scientifically-based programme. For Birch, the major criteria in the movement towards a just society capable of sustaining itself are ecological in nature: the first requirement is to organise people's lives and the lives of other living creatures so that they can sustain themselves within the limitations of the world's resources; the second requirement is to ensure a worthy life for all people. "A society so organized to achieve both these ends we can call a sustainable global society in contrast to the present unsustainable global society."[2]

A society capable of sustaining itself, Birch believes, cannot take shape without radical transformations in science and technology, as well as in economics and politics. However, as he sees it, a religious

[1] "Integrating the Two Revolutions of Our Time" in *Anticipation*, No. 22, May 1976, pp. 4, 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 7.

perception of life must be one of the chief factors in this transformation. This religious perception, according to Birch, is capable of overcoming "the spiritual deficiency" which is the result of mechanistic science and materialistic philosophy. "Total spiritual confusion prevails in the modern world about the relationship of man to nature in a technological culture."[1] Making the ecological factor an absolute for the development of civilisation thus serves two purposes for Birch: (1) to gloss over class antagonisms and (2) to represent the church as the chief force for resolving ecological problems and a decisive spiritual factor in overcoming all civilisation crises. In his analysis of social liberation, Birch also attempts to substantiate the priority of the ecological factor in social development. All this enhances, in his opinion, religon's role as a spiritual integrator for a whole world. "Science has laid bare the amazing interdependence and physical unity of the world. But the churches have, for the most part, left hidden the spiritual unity that alone gives the physical its meaning. I cannot think on this personalistic and unitary image of the creation without a humbling sense that all creatures are fellow creatures and that human responsibility extends infinitely to the whole of creation."[2]

The role played by "ecological balance" in social development and in the self-sustaining society is also

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[1] Ibidem.
[2] Ibidem.

made absolute by André Dumas. As a theologian, he attempts to substantiate this biblically. He stresses that previous methods of influencing the environment were based on one of the biblical principles, but at present it is necessary to focus attention on other ideas contained in the Scriptures. It transpires that the time has come for man to carry out the providential task he has been assigned by God. Ecumenists believe that it is expressed in the following passage from Genesis: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to *till* and to *keep* it." The word "to till", to cultivate, to direct the world acquired an almost exclusive importance during the last four centuries. But now the main task is expressed by the word "to keep", if mankind does not want to find itself in the situation of a man who chops off the branch on which he is sitting. In the broadest etymological meaning, "ecology" means the intelligent use of the environment, without which people would be condemned to live in the desert, even if this desert were the result of intensive scientific and technological activity. This understanding of ecology supposedly corresponds to biblical principles.

Dumas interprets the very notion of "ecological balance" broadly; to him, it includes the idea of "economic justice", political equality, humanism, and so forth. To the religious mind, the solution of ecological problems thus appears to be the solution to all social conflicts. Theological "models" of solutions to the ecological crisis claiming universality have thus been added to the already numerous models created

by secular bourgeois sociologists. There is no longer any conflict between scientific explanations and religious traditions, the ecumenists claim. They are no longer rivals. Religion has ceased to reserve some mysterious spheres in nature for itself, viewing them as beyond scientific research. Science, equally, is not trying to replace religion by explaining reality and suggesting a "scientific" model deriving from objective knowledge. On the contrary, they believe, science is becoming concerned over the possible destruction of the environment as a result of progress in fundamental research leading to technological development, which in turn has become an instrument of commercial greed, national rivalry, and the unhealthy worshipping of production in which natural resources are used up without increasing people's gratification. "The sciences are looking to religion to help them to escape from this menacing abyss, into which humanity is in danger of falling because in 'tilling' everything it has forgotten the exhortation to 'keep' the universe."[1]

However, having proclaimed the unity of scientific knowledge and religious faith, the theologian then proceeds to delimit science, setting boundaries to its cognitive possibilities and philosophical generalisations. Dumas demands that science and technology have only a utilitarian, practical application and not seek to penetrate the "eternal mysteries of existence", yet at the same time help to renew creationist theolo-

[1] André Dumas, "When Science Looks to Faith" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p. 389.

gy. In Dumas' opinion, religious and spiritual deficiency leads mankind to irresponsibility, for men become only producers and consumers, losing their sense of measure and becoming predators rather than preservers; yet at the same time "God the Creator ... challenges humanity to become the dynamic and guardian of creation in history".[1] Dumas believes that the ecumenical image of God—the evangelical "Word"—is the basis of freedom and responsibility, as well as unity, which joins together humanity and nature.

Today all the practical recommendations advanced by the ecumenical forums have an ecological tinge. Recommendations issued by the MIT Conference included an appeal to the churches "to re-examine their worship and liturgies to see whether they sufficiently encourage respectful attention to the other creatures with which human beings share the world and express sufficient concern for the destructive consequences of our actions.... We call on the Churches to rethink their ethics regarding creation in order that their teachings may reflect more fully our solidarity with all living creatures, as well as our special authority and responsibility for nature".[2]

It cannot be denied that ecumenical theorists have suggested many concrete measures aimed at improving the ecological situation, in particular the rational use of natural resources, including energy resour-

[1] André Dumas, Op. cit., p. 390.

[2] "Humanity, Nature and God" in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p. 416.

ces, for the development of society and its future (interpretation of theological aspects of the problem, the use of expert opinion, an influence to be exerted on energy policy, etc.). True, reflecting the negative reaction of the population at large to the dangerous forms of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful ends under capitalism (radioactive pollution of the environment, etc.), the majority of participants in the MIT Conference voted for the recommendation to introduce a five-year moratorium on the building of new nuclear power plants. Ecumenists see this as a compromise solution that is needed in order to solve the problem of locating and guaranteeing the correct building of nuclear power plants.[1]

We should note that ecumenists see peace and disarmament as the conditions for solving global problems, including ecological ones, in the present and future. Extrapolating the arms race conducted by imperialist circles and pessimistic forecasts by bourgeois theorists about the nuclear destruction of mankind onto civilisation as a whole, ecumenists express their concern about the creation of weapons for mass destruction and appeal to all nations to reduce and eliminate—as far as this is possible—such weapons.

In connection with this, ecumenists point out that the traditional image of the scientist as a neutral researcher dedicated to the search for "pure truth"

[1] "Energy for the Future. Recommendations from the WCC Conference on Faith, Science, and the Future, held at MIT in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, p. 414.

was severely criticised at the MIT Conference by theologians, occasionally by scientists from the developed countries, and constantly by delegates from the developing countries. Their criticism was directed, for the most part, against the means by which technology and applied science contribute to concentrating economical and political power, thus increasing the gulf between "the rich and poor nations", against the close alliance between theoretical science and the special interests of governments and monopolies which decide the question of funding for new types of weapons. A nuclear catastrophe can only be avoided, as ecumenists see it, in strict conformity with creationist doctrine. Inasmuch as everything is created by God, he "requires us to seek peace, justice and freedom, creating a world where none need fear and every life is sacred".[1]

Ecumenists seek to substantiate peace as a global state of international relations through notions drawn from prophetic theology, although they admit that the development of weapons of mass destruction has given prophecy an ironic turn.

Faith in the fact that historical events and human fate are predestined by God is the theme of one of Philip Potter's latest writings. Commenting on the 32nd verse of the Book of Isaiah, he states that it contains the basis for resolving problems in peace and disarmament. In his opinion, this furnishes one

[1] "Science for Peace. A Resolution on Nuclear Disarmament" in *Faith and Science in an Unjust World,* Vol. 2. Ed. by P. Abrecht, WCC, Geneva, 1980, p. 169.

of the prophetic visions about a new world of people and nature. "This is relevant for us today". Only by carrying out this foreordained task can we "move into the future, God's future of justice and peace".[1] It is noteworthy that these ideas were expressed in Potter's address to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament.[2]

However, the mainstay of all the ecumenical futurological and ecological schemes to "save" civilisation is the idea of establishing harmony between man and nature and harmonious relations within society by means of reviving a "true" religious spirit, which alone is capable of uniting the whole world. This interpretation of historical prospects clearly expresses the utopian and illusory nature of ecumenical programmes for social development.

Analysis of ecumenical ideas about global problems shows that they are an attempt to create a model of religious philosophy which would give answers to today's most important problems and actively carry out the ideological functions of manipulating men's minds and behaviour. The guiding light of this model is a synthesis of transcendental eschatology, creationism, and prophetism together with recognition of the importance of human activity in the historical process. Although ecumenical notions of social de-

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[1] Philip Potter, "Peace: The Fruit of Justice" in *Theology Today*, Vol. 36, No. 4, January 1980, p. 10.

[2] "Dr. Philip Potter Addresses the UN Special Session on Disarmament, June 12, 1978" in *The Churches in International Affairs*, CCIA of WCC, Geneva, 1979, pp. 68-72.

velopment are closely interlinked with the ideas advanced by secular bourgeois sociology, religious theorists claim to have created models of social progress that are universal, global, and unique in nature. In their theological concepts, ecumenists place the problems of technological progress, war and peace, and ecological balance outside the framework of concrete socio-economic systems. Paying lip service to scientific knowledge and advancing the slogan of partnership between science and religion, ecumenical ideologues proclaim religious faith the sole means of ensuring mankind's just and moral activity in carrying out history's supreme goals, as well as of overcoming social antagonisms and the ecological crisis. Despite the ecumenical movement's tendency towards secularisation and towards taking account of modern man's perception of the world, ecumenical ideas about global problems are illusory and utopian in nature, for they are based on theoretical and methodological postulates that are metaphysical and idealistic.

Nonetheless, the ecumenical principles behind the treatment of global problems exert a definite influence on the policies of international religious organisations and serve as a conceptual basis for the WCC's activity.

All these theological efforts are being undertaken in order to provide a theoretical basis for the problems in church practice and religious sociology analysed above: the problem of religious organisation and its place in society, religious activity (missionary, charity, worship, etc.), the relationships between re-

ligion and modern culture, and so on. But alongside this, theological-philosophical theory has its own specific, age-old traditions, its "eternal" problems.

2. GENERAL ECCLESIOLOGY AND THE CRISIS IN THE MODERN CHURCH

The division in the church remains an indisputable fact. Along with other manifestations of religious life, it is linked with the general crisis in the traditional churches, the crisis in religious ideology as a whole, and the different positions of the churches in capitalist and socialist society. The theological doctrine about general problems in the single church is one attempt to overcome this crisis, and problems in general ecclesiology occupy an important place in ecumenical discussion.[1]

The participants in this discussion seek to unify the many interpretations of the universal (catholic) church's essence and tasks. However, not even a definition of the church that would be acceptable to all has been found yet. The church's essence, for instance, is interpreted in different ways by the Protestant and Orthodox churches. At the Edinburgh Faith and Order Conference the Orthodox theologian, Sergey Bulgakov, criticised the Protestant principle of the church's "founding" by Christ and suggested instead

[1] Materials from the Fifth WCC Assembly state that "the unity of the Church is thus both the first task of the WCC and also that end to which all our ecumenical work converges" (*Uppsala to Nairobi*, p. 121).

the Orthodox doctrine of the church's "eternal nature". According to this doctrine, the church existed even before Christ: in paradise, in Old Testament times. Another theologian, G. Florovsky, states his notion of the church in the following fashion: "The Church is the living image of eternity in time."

Differences of opinion about the essence of the church continue to exist today.[1]

Ecumenically-minded theologians are striving to stress the church's historical importance and uniqueness. Ecumenical documents examine the church as "oneness" and its constant renewal as an "event and institution".

"Oneness" implies that the church is an indivisible part of divine providence in history. The church's oneness is manifested in its innovation in creating "the new man" (compared to Old Testament traditions) and in temporal innovation.

Theologians interpret time as a form of man's relationship to God (the Old Testament being a time of expectation and the New Testament being a time of salvation through Jesus Christ). Ecumenists affirm the presence of divine eternity in the church's life. At the same time, however, they stress that "the church's time is a chronologically new time". Taking as their point of departure an existentialist notion of time (interpreted time) which has lost its objective nature (Paul Tillich), ecumenists write about the transformation of so-called *kairos* (the term adopted

[1] See *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 6, 1968, p. 54.

in bourgeois philosophy and theology for the historical process associated with the coming of Christ and the moving force behind this process) into a concrete and specific temporal event (*chronos*). The messianic embodiment of "the Word" (i.e., God) took place at a definite time and, from this moment on, mankind's history, in its unscientific theological interpretation, supposedly acquired a new meaning.

The church's innovative character and uniqueness showed themselves, according to theologians, in its relations with the surrounding world. In this way, incidentally, ecumenists attempt to link a "renewed" view of the church with modern life. The relations between the church and the world are viewed as the fulfilling of an activity ascribed to Christ, "the Church's Master".

The mythical activity of Christ and the church are regarded by theologians not as an event in the past, but as an event in the present and "at each moment of history". Anyone who does not recognise this, the ecumenists say, is rejecting Christ's "physical reality", his historical reality, and his presence in everyday life. Thus the church again acquires the right to exist in the present.

Ecumenists go on to say that, because the church lives in the world, it enters into conflict with sin, and inasmuch as the uniqueness of Christ and the Spirit are present in the church, it cannot be dissolved in the world. Moreover, they try to show that the church best preserves its originality not by distancing itself from the world, but by serving it. The church, theo-

logians claim, will be devoured by the sinful world if it fears sacrificing its life for it.

Ecumenists distinguish what is immutable in the church and what is transient in it, linked with "the innovative nature of creation". The church, as "Christ's body", came into being for the fulfilling of "God's goals". The resolution of other earthly matters takes place beyond it, is connected with the activity of believers in the world, with so-called "charity" and "humility", with human searchings.

Ecumenists see the manifestation of the church as "event" and "institution" in all spheres of religious and public life. These notions serve as subjects of general discussion, and the Montreal reports claimed that "the way in which God's decisive action is constantly renewed has been described by the words 'event' and 'institution' . . . they can also point to the way in which the Church's Lord is, and becomes ever anew, present to his people through the action of the Holy Spirit".[1]

The notion of "event" stresses the nature of the changes in the church's life, as well as points to a "force" manifested in it through divine will (Christological-pneumatological concept) and man's corresponding actions.

The church as an "institution" has supposedly given men historical and social models, as well as models of organisational structures.

[1] *Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order.* Report of Section 1, "The Church in the Purpose of God" p. 4, § 20.

Ecclesiological problems are also conditioned by views on the nature of "divine grace". Protestants especially stress the role played by "divine grace" in man's salvation. The Orthodox Church, on the other hand, insists on the co-participation of "liberty and responsibility" in his salvation, for Orthodoxy cannot "agree with other confessions which base their teaching on predetermination excluding man's participation in his own salvation, because the Church has always firmly believed that salvation cannot come about by grace alone or by man's efforts alone, but by the participation of man's free will in the action of divine grace".

Trying to gloss over the sharpness of this polemic, Protestant ecumenists have made certain concessions. They now mention liberty within the interpretation of "event", but the principle of predestination remains in force.

To create a theological basis for a single church, a basis for a single approach to appraising the church's place in society, as well as resolving inter-confessional disagreements between ecumenists it is necessary to overcome differences of opinion on the nature of the church, its activity and features, among which theologians count unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. It is the interpretation of these questions that divides most of the Christian tendencies until now.

We have already mentioned that trinitarianism (the theological teaching about the recognition of all three persons in the Trinity) is a part of the WCC

credo. Ecumenists hope to derive the church's unity from this trinitarian unity, which presupposes the unity of "God's people" outside of time. This mystical concept of divine unity through Christ, in their view, unites the members of the church by providing them with the opportunity to share the religious link with God the Father in the Holy Spirit. The conclusion follows from this that, for believers, for "God's people" to live in disunity and to allow differences of opinion in the church means to contradict their own essence. A divided church is "terrible", the ecumenists say, for it rejects its link with Christ (is Christ divided?). They frequently refer to the view advanced by noted Protestant theologian Karl Barth that a divided church is totally impossible; it is only possible if sin is possible.

Inasmuch as the role of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) is given great importance in modern religious theory and in the practice of all Christian confessions, ecumenists have tried to infer church unity from the unity of the pneumatological aspect of faith. Manifestations of the Holy Spirit have had an integrating influence, they write, and have drawn together "God's people", "giving them one heart, one spirit". The church's unity is expressed on both the physical and spiritual level. The physical church expresses its oneness by its historical existence, its activity in secular society, and its spiritual existence by its existence in religious society. But the source of this unity, theologians conclude, is God-given.

Theologians do not neglect the need to substantiate

the church's "earthly" basis. In their opinion, the church is all-encompassing in space and time, and the expression of this is its "catholicity" (universality). The church's universal nature is most fully expressed in the world mission. For theologians, only a church that actively carries out missionary work can be regarded as a "genuine" church ensuring continuity in its existence. Missionary activity, the ecumenists say, is strengthened by all-permeating Christian love and knows no geographical limits or socio-political distinctions.

Theologians go on to try to link the church's universal character to the individual features of Christian life. The Christian belongs to the universal church to the extent to which he is a member of Christ's church, and it is only as such that he acquires individuality in his personal existence, in his calling and duty.

The rite of Eucharist (Holy Communion), recognised by all Christian tendencies, is usually regarded as one manifestation of the church's universality. Nonetheless, the narrowly confessional interpretation of various church rules continues, and ecumenists are forced to only postulate the need for a universally Christian faith, the need for universal obedience to Christ, and so forth as a testament to universal views and relations.

Ecumenists are striving to overcome the division between confessions and, as a result, are discussing the idea of succession, which makes it possible to preserve a single basis for the Christian Church. Theolo-

gians connect this problem with "apostolicity" (according to theological doctrine, the apostles—Christ's disciples and followers—participated in founding the Christian Church). The church's apostolic nature supposedly stresses the continuity in its activity, doctrine, and worship.

However, ecumenists have not succeeded in solving the problem of unity even in the above-mentioned questions, although they did announce, for instance, that Christology led to agreement on individual question between the European and North American theological schools.

Different theological problems have been examined at different ecumenical meetings. For instance, "gifts" and "tasks" in religious activity were discussed at the Montreal Conference.[1]

Attempts were made to tie in problems of unity with catholicity through the Holy Spirit (the pneumatological aspect of faith) at the following ecumenical meetings: Bristol, 1967; Uppsala, 1968; Louvain, 1971; Accra, 1974; and others. Unity in this context was regarded as a "gift" and a "search". With the help of these concepts, ecumenists hoped to resolve the controversial question about the church's "visible" and "invisible" unity. The first concept stresses unity bestowed on the church through the Holy Spirit, and the second stresses "the striving, the tendency towards

[1] *Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order.* Report of Section 1, "The Church in the Purpose of God", p. 4, § 23.

visible unity". Such an understanding immediately produced protest from Orthodox theologians, who stressed the church's eternal unity. Then disagreement arose at the Uppsala Assembly about the "covert" character of the Spirit's uninterrupted activity in the church.

To bring about real church unity, ecumenists have been forced to link theological speculations to earthly conditions. The former director of the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Nicos Nissiotis, wrote about this in a special WCC publication. This ecumenical theorist argued for a broad approach to catholicity: "A wider understanding of catholicity is the right result of an authentic cosmic christology. This is not a speculation, but it can be conceived only on the basis of the total engagement of the Church in the whole world."[1]

Nissiotis believes that catholicity cannot be reduced to humanist problems. It is necessary, he says, to preserve divine priority in history. This can be achieved through introducing the pneumatological aspect of faith into the teaching about Christ, which would make it possible to explain the church's renewal through the action of the Holy Spirit (so-called charismatic action).

Nissiotis' ideas produced discussion in theological circles. Some of the participants advanced mystical

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[1] Nicos A. Nissiotis, "The Pneumatological Aspect of the Catholicity of the Church" in *What Unity Implies*, WCC, Geneva, 1969, p. 11.

ideas about Christ's participation in individual manifestations of reality.

Other participants reduced everything to a secular interpretation of catholicity deriving from Christ's "virtues". They see catholicity as a distinctive understanding of Christ's embodiment. They acknowledge the importance of economic and technological achievements in human development. Therefore a "true" understanding of catholicity goes beyond the framework of activity by the traditional church institutions, they believe.

Nicos Nissiotis, a theorist of official ecumenism, criticised such ideas, accusing their initiators of frivolous theological generalisation. To counterbalance them, he advanced the idea about Jesus Christ's concrete, historical existence. He views the human side of Christ's activity as specific in terms of time and place. However, the theologian writes, Christ's "humanity" is different from the "humanity" of the sinful world. "True" humanity is linked to divine manifestations, especially with the Holy Spirit's activity in the church. "True" humanity is more than just "the self-development of man and the affirmation of his natural capacities by intellectual, social, and technical development. True humanity is a realistic struggle for renewal which requires a total, personal reorientation of one's life as a member of the fellowship established by God and a new action in the world in the name of this fellowship".[1]

[1] Nicos A. Nissiotis, Op. cit., p. 15.

In the 1970s ecumenical discussion about the church moved to a new level as a result of contacts between the WCC and the Vatican. A joint theological commission functioning under the aegis of the WCC and the Catholic Church discussed catholicity and apostolicity for the last several years, and this was reported in the materials which emerged from the Louvain Conference. However, this commission did not succeed in achieving unity of any sort. Its participants said that the published document was not "a joint statement", but only a "working tool" for further joint study. Without having reached agreement on general principles, theologians switched their attention to specific questions.

In future discussion, ecumenists hope to resolve questions such as the role played by the apostles in Christian history, the relationship between identity, change, and norm in church life, worship, the episcopate, and other spheres.

Theological tradition makes the role of the apostles in founding the church absolute and views them as Christ's disciples and followers. People of various religious tendencies try to link the origins of their churches with the life of a given one apostle. However, even in the theological milieu there are differences in appraising the apostles' activity. Ecumenists try to overcome differences of opinion by drawing on the results of critical study of the New Testament. They devote most of their attention to the apostles' role as witnesses to Christ's life. Two points of view on their role have emerged. Representatives of one

point of view base their views on the interpretation of biblical texts, while others base themselves on epistles attributed to St. Paul.

Theologians supporting the first version stress the role of the twelve apostles who witnessed Christ's "earthly" activity. The apostle is thus a kind of guarantor that a certain tradition goes back to Jesus Christ. Adherents to the "Paulist" views give a large role to apostles of the following generation, thus leaving the witnessing of Christ's missionary work in the shadow. The Paulists stress the missionary aspect of the apostles' activity.

Thus, the expansion of confessional representation in ecumenical theological discussion not only failed to lead to the establishment of the hoped-for unity, but even further complicated already thorny questions.

For instance, the ecumenists were faced with the problem of how to reconcile the demand for church unity with the existing differences in church life. The Protestant majority adhered to the view that "true catholicity is unity in diversity".[1] However, Orthodox theorists object to their views, stressing instead the unity of all that is divine, and attributing differences to man's actions.

Many ecumenists see a way out of this polemic and out of the current church division in a return

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[1] *Drafts for Sections. Uppsala 1968. Prepared for the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, WCC, Geneva, 1968, p. 22.

to early Christian unity, which long ago served as the basis for the founding of different confessions. However, this appeal to the "common sources" of Christianity did not reconcile Protestant and Orthodox theorists. Orthodox theologians refer to the church's entire historical heritage, while Protestants try to find a source of unity in early Christian variety.

Ecumenists have recently begun to advance a new concept of so-called "anthropocentrical" unity, which links the church's unity to mankind's unity. The ecumenical theologian J. Robert Nelson observes that "a realistic and responsible concern for the unity of mankind means for all Christians participation in the struggling movement to eliminate the causes and structures of division among and within the many churches and confessions. The overcoming of divisions (as distinct, of course, from healthy diversities) has significance not only for Church unity but for human unity".[1]

The ideal is held to be a utopian, classless, world community, held together solely by religious-ethical relations. A new model of the religious-social model of life ("a new life-style", as ecumenists put it) is oriented towards the ideal embodied in the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (a priest executed for his part in the resistance to Hitler).

It was resolved at the Louvain meeting to con-

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[1] J. Robert Nelson, "The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind" in *What Unity Implies*, WCC, Geneva, 1969, pp. 111-12.

duct ecumenical study into "Concepts of Unity and Models of Union". The first document containing preparatory study of this question was published in late 1972.

Above all, the authors of this document sought to "legitimise" the existence of contradictions and tensions between the churches, which are part of the ecumenical movement: "Tension, indeed, is an essential element of living fellowship. For fellowship does not obliterate the identity of the individual member. . . .Unity is not the end of tension, therefore."[1]

The development of ecumenical organisations is presented in this document not as a mechanical movement from division to unity, but as a complex, contradictory process, in which the entry of each new member church brings with it definite structural-functional changes (the entry of African churches into the WCC, contacts with the Pentecostal movement and the Catholic Church).

Although ecumenists stress that the achieving of church unity in practice is most important, they give great importance to the theory of church unity, as well. Several concepts of church unity are examined in the above-mentioned ecumenical document.[2]

Inasmuch as the WCC contains various types of religious organisations and various points of view

[1] *Concepts of Unity and Models of Union.* A Preliminary Study Document No. 1. Commission on Faith and Order, WCC, Geneva, 1972, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., p. 7.

on the nature and degree of Christian integration, ecumenists suggested various "models of union" for discussion. Basically, four models are represented: an "inter-confessional movement", a "federation of churches", "total mutual recognition", and "organic union".

These "models" of church unity were discussed at the WCC Assembly in Nairobi (1975). Striving to adapt the structure of the future united church to reality, participants in the session of the Faith and Order Commission in Bangalore (1978) discussed church unity in the light of the new demands of the modern world in its cultural, historical and socio-political variety.

The general religious crisis in the modern world prevents ecumenists from elaborating a single concept or "model" of the united church. Inter-confessional differences of opinion only serve to heighten the long-existing contradictions in the theological teaching about the church. These same reasons prevent ecumenists from resolving the theological problem about the relationship between traditions, the Tradition, and Scripture.

3. TRADITIONS, THE TRADITION, AND SCRIPTURE

Discussion on a given theological problem gives one an idea of how ecumenists view the relationship between religion and culture and reflects the contradiction between them in modern society. The exami-

nation of the relationship between religion and various components of modern culture is an essential part of the Marxist critique of religion.

Ecumenists try to establish, on the one hand, the link between the general Protestant interpretation of the relationship between traditions, the Tradition, and Scripture and the Orthodox-Catholic interpretation, and on the other hand, they seek to systematise the variety within Protestantism. Fairly substantial changes in the theological resolution of these problems have come about today. The principle of *sola scriptura* (scripture alone) is being increasingly replaced by the principle of *scriptura numquam sola* (scripture is never alone). Ecumenists have stressed the need to study those divisions that have occurred in the history of Christianity in an ecumenical light in order to overcome both the differences themselves, as well as their divisive influence.

On the basis of research in the field of exegesis and church history, ecumenists have drawn conclusions about the enormous role played by traditions in religious life.

Marxist teaching regards traditions as a fundamental element of culture by means of which its heritage is passed on from past to future through the present. The progress of social life, conditioned by socio-economic and spiritual factors, would have been impossible without traditions.

Modern theologians stress the double aspect of religious tradition: its receptivity and continuity. Thus they try to justify religious rites and worship, pro-

claiming them "mysterious signs of the approach to a new life". They oppose religious tradition to "traditionalism", which they regard as a distortion of tradition.

As for the problem of tradition and Christianity, ecumenists point out, firstly, the ideological antecedents to Christianity (true, everything is reduced to Judaic and Greek philosophical tradition), and secondly, the importance of Christian tradition itself is stressed, a tradition which supposedly makes up the basis for all European culture. Theologians say that the Western world rests on three pillars: Greek thought, the Roman legal and state system, and Christian "spirituality". The heritage of antiquity is thus "strained" through Christianity, and Western culture is proclaimed Christian culture.

Christianity did, in fact, influence European civilisation, but this influence was fundamentally conservative. It should also be remembered that the influence was less a result of the system of religious beliefs itself than of the social and cultural life accompanying it (economic-organisational, cultural-organisational, and political-organisational).

An important place in ecumenical discussion was given to analysis of the relationships between traditions and the Tradition.

Ecumenical documents use the following terms: "tradition", meaning the process by which a given heritage is passed on and that which is conveyed; "traditions" (plural), meaning types of traditions forming the basis for confessional divisions; and final-

ly, "the Tradition". This latter term produces especially strong disagreement in ecumenical circles.

All the Christian churches recognise their link with the Tradition to one degree or another. Disagreement arises over how important they regard this fact; does the form in which faith is received and conveyed have fundamental importance for religious revelation, or is it of no importance at all, or even harmful for revelation? There are different answers to this question, which intensifies inter-confessional discussion.

The Tradition is especially important for the Orthodox Church. George Florovsky defines the Tradition as the church itself in its unbroken continuity. Orthodoxy gives special attention to "movement in Christ" "guided by the Holy Spirit". It follows from this that the church has its basis less in "the written Word" than in the person of Christ, "the embodied Word" to which the Scriptures testify. Archdeacon Nikolai (Badaui) has stated the point of view of Orthodox participants in the discussion thus: the Tradition, according to the Orthodox view, as a source of faith, is equal in authority and importance to Scripture. The Bible can also be understood from the Orthodox point of view through "the living experience of the church's activity". Thus, the Tradition is identified with the history of the Orthodox Church.

The Catholic Church also assigns great importance to the Tradition. The figures behind the Protestant Reformation sharply criticised the Tradition. They used "traditions" in the plural, identifying them

with man-made rules and regulations in religious life which could be useful in certain circumstances. If, however, circumstances change, then believers have the right to reject tradition. They regarded the Scripture as the highest authority, an apostolic testimony of divine revelation. True, Martin Luther recognised the Tradition of early Christianity and the first four ecumenical councils, believing that it was a faithful interpretation of the Scripture, although it added nothing to it.

Luther believed that the evangelical church was genuinely catholic, for it is the authentic church of the early Christian period, the essence of which, in his view, was distorted by the Catholic Church. Another point is also worthy of mention. Luther agreed that the church had existed before the Scripture, but insisted that before the church and the Scripture there was "the Word of God". This notion is not very well understood in many studies on religion. For Luther, "the Word of God" was the "proclaimed", living word, not the written word. Luther considered the principle of *viva vox* primary in the church—"the Word" must be preached and listened to, for it is insufficient to write and read books. Modern theologians interpret this postulate as a special "tradition", "the Word" which is passed on. In modern scholastics this is placed above the church, for it is seen as making up the content of the Scripture. Thus, although the presence of "tradition" is recognised, it is subordinated to the Scripture as evidence of the "Word" of the living (trinitary) God.

The very fact of discussion on this point produces displeasure among theologians. Some representatives of the "young" churches in the developing countries regard them as inopportune and distracting from the real tasks of our time. Nonetheless, ecumenists hope to continue this discussion and to complete it. There is a marked tendency for the Orthodox-Catholic and Protestant positions to grow closer to each other. Ecumenists noted this tendency in the pre-council studies of Catholic theologians (Karl Rahner and others) where, together with the principle of *magisterium* (the church's authority), the special significance of the Scripture is also recognised. Certain Protestant theologians are also re-examining their views on the Tradition.

Some West European participants in the ecumenical discussions have pointed out that oral instruction (teaching) and the oral transmission of philosophical and religious principles was extremely important for classical philosophers and for the ancient Hebrew and early Christian thinkers. Judaism also had the tradition of transmitting "the law", which was passed on from generation to generation by rabbis. Ecumenists draw their conclusion about the likelihood of the existence of an oral tradition out of which the book of the Holy Scripture emerged. They claim that this "tradition" was created by direct religious experience.

Ecumenists hold the view that the Tradition began with the apostles and the sermons they preached after Christ. The Bible reflects these primary reli-

gious postulates, the so-called *kerigma* in which "total freedom of the spirit reigns". Thus, the ecumenists acknowledge, the Tradition is not free of human experience, which made it possible to initiate various types of biblical traditions.

All this demonstrates that the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* has undergone change in ecumenical discussion. While the role of the historical church Tradition is recognised, it is also believed that Scripture with its eschatological orientation influences the Tradition and helps it become the "true" carrier of "God's Word".

Nonetheless, final unity of views between theologians in this discussion was not achieved either.

An article written by the Swiss Protestant theologian, Jean Louis Leuba, and appended to the report of the European Theological Commission is especially interesting for an acquaintance with ecumenical attempts to reconcile different theological tendencies and adapt them to the present day. This article provides a brief, albeit somewhat subjective, description of: (1) problems on which accord has been reached, and (2) problems on which discussion still continues.

Point (1) includes statements by all participants in inter-confessional discussion on the legitimacy of even posing the question. We have already mentioned that Orthodox and Catholic theologians regard the Tradition as a matter of fact. Protestants today also recognise that the term "Tradition" is irreplaceable as an indication of one of the basic aspects of Christianity. They say that Christ's presence in all signif-

icant religious events is only possible as a result of the act of transmitting the Tradition. Scripture is linked with this same act as a record of apostolic witness, although Scripture in not the act itself. Therefore, according to Leuba, Protestants understand the Tradition today as a way of bringing about Christ's presence. This gives rise to a possibility of a Protestant-Orthodox dialogue.

Participants in the ecumenical discussion reached agreement that true Tradition is an act of the Holy Spirit. An official document from the Montreal Conference acknowledged: "Thus we can say that we exist as Christians by the Tradition of the Gospel . . . testified in Scripture, transmitted in and by the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit."[1] Leuba sees the possibility for working out a conciliatory position in such statements.

Striving to overcome divisions between churches, representatives of all confessions are trying to find criteria for establishing a precise distinction between the Tradition and traditions with which the former is linked without being a part of them. In short, theologians are trying to remove the basis for mutual reproaches that the essence of Christianity is being identified with any one of the confessional traditions.

In evaluating such efforts, Leuba says that a single point of view already exists on the distinction between the Tradition (viewed by theologians as a means for

[1] *Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order.* Report of Section 2, "Scripture, Tradition and Traditions", 1963, p. 2, § 45.

ensuring continuity in history through Christ's activity) and traditions as "temporal expressions" of this Tradition.

Leuba tries to translate the theological-scholastic means for treating the Tradition and Scripture in a practical religious vein. Then the criteria for distinguishing the Tradition from traditions will be found in the "correct", from the theological point of view, understanding of the relationship between Scripture and the church.

Participants in the Montreal Conference came to the conclusion that "the Tradition in its written form, as Holy Scripture (comprising both the Old and the New Testament) has to be interpreted by the Church in ever new situations. Such interpretation of the Tradition is to be found in the crystallization of tradition in the creeds, the liturgical forms of the Sacraments and other forms of worship, and also in the preaching of the Word and in theological expositions of the Church's doctrine".[1] At a meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Bangalore (1978), the notion of the Tradition and church traditions adopted at the Montreal Conference was examined in terms of contextualisation of theology adapted to concrete social situations.[2]

This ends the list of questions on which theologians have been able to reach agreement. After this, theologians admit that differences of opinion exist in ecumenical discussion.

[1] Ibid., p. 3, § 50.

[2] *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1, p. 24.

The basic delimitation is connected with attempts to dovetail religious faith and science in modern life. Some Protestant and Orthodox theologians defend the distinctive nature of faith throughout the church's entire history. They interpret the following New Testament statement correspondingly: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). The Tradition is proclaimed an infailing criterion in the struggle against heresy, but one which prevented movement in religious life. This treatment of the question, however, hinders theologians' adaptation to contemporary life.

Other ecumenists demonstrate the need to establish closer relations between theology and science.[1] At present they take as their point of departure the Catholic point of view, according to which changes in religious dogma do not affect Christ's essence, but only individual Christological features. But some theologians saw a rejection of the original nature of faith even in this cautious position. As participants in ecumenical theological discussion admit, they have reached a dead-end in examining these questions.

The search for a way out of this situation led ecumenical theologians to discuss the Bible's importance and role, with special attention focused on its hermeneutical interpretation. While stressing the re-

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[1] The relationship between science and religious faith was examined in detail, and an attempt made to reconcile them at the Science and Faith Ecumenical Consultation in Mexico (1975) (see *Anticipation*, No. 22, 1976).

ligious importance of biblical texts, they tried to adapt them to the tasks of the ideological struggle.

4. THE ECUMENICAL INTERPRETATION OF BIBLICAL MYTHS

For literary scholarship the Bible is a landmark in literary history, one of many which can be subjected to philological, historical, and other forms of analysis, just like any other literary work.

Theologians treat biblical texts as works "inspired by God", a product of divine revelation. These texts are used for traditional theological searchings, as an apology for Christianity's socio-political principles, and for worship.

The Bible occupies an important place in the teaching and practice of all the Christian confessions, but serious differences of opinion do exist in the interpretation of its texts (Orthodoxy and Protestantism even differ on the number of books in the Bible).

Ecumenists try to elaborate their own point of view on the Bible. The document entitled "The Bible in the Ecumenical Movement" is very important in this respect. Its authors announced that "the Ecumenical Movement of the twentieth century has found in the Bible a dynamic force, making for that unity which God wills. The common language of Christian prayer and liturgy is a scriptural language, and in our time many have come to a fresh appreciation of the biblical content of the churches' liturgies".[1]

[1] *Work Book for the Assembly Committees*, WCC, Geneva, 1968, p. 125.

When preparing for the assembly in Nairobi, ecumenists attempted to reach agreement on a common definition of biblical hermeneutics. Hermeneutics originally emerged as a teaching about the interpretation of various types of literary texts, especially those of antiquity. Hermeneutics is also one tendency in modern bourgeois philosophy. Theologians apply the principles of hermeneutics to interpreting the Bible. They have focused their efforts on researching the Bible's "authority". There is a good reason for this. The Bible's lack of scientific basis and archaic nature are obvious. Nonetheless, theologians are trying to preserve the Bible's traditional role as a basic source of Christian faith and behaviour in the modern world (it should be remembered that recognition of the Bible is included in the WCC fundamental theory), although serious differences of opinion arise whenever ecumenists try to interpret the Bible in modern scientific terms. Ecumenical theorists were unable, however, to introduce unity into the interpretation of biblical texts in sermons, in classroom lessons, etc.

Historical criticism, which has done so much to establish the real sources of biblical texts and whose results cannot be ignored by theologians, has had an enormous influence on the study of the Bible. Ecumenists admit that the Bible can be studied and interpreted to some extent as a collection of "human" documents reflecting the specific historical situation and linked to other historical documents.

But if the Bible is viewed as a collection of human

documents, the question then arises: which text and which concrete historical situation can be taken as the basis, as "true witness"? These problems are being studied by the school founded by prominent Protestant theologian, Rudolf Bultmann, with its theories of "de-mythologisation", "existential hermeneutics", and the like. Ecumenists have also been forced to take account of the opinions of conservative Christians, who see historical criticism as an attempt to destroy the Bible's authority.

Ecumenists acknowledge the historical "remoteness" between biblical texts and the modern reader, but they try nonetheless to bring this document of the past into conformity with modern thought. However, this approach can easily take analysis beyond the boundaries of religious doctrine. Hence the ecumenists' dual attitude to the latest research methods advanced by the bourgeois social sciences and philosophy.

Many ecumenists are extremely cautious in their attitude to efforts to adapt structuralist methods to exegetics. Other ecumenists, however, attempt to adapt some of the methods employed by bourgeois secular philosophy to biblical interpretation. However, all ecumenists acknowledge the traditional point of view that the Bible poses and resolves mankind's "eternal" questions.

Thus, this complex and contradictory theological situation forced ecumenists to reject a search for solutions to general problems and to focus instead on a "narrower" question, the Bible's authority, which

they link with men's religious experience. "Authority is therefore a present reality only when men experience it as authority; at the same time, it transcends human experience."[1]

The notion of the usefulness of "relative concepts", which imply free choice without any compulsion (the Protestant approach) enjoys enormous popularity with ecumenists. An official report at the Louvain Conference admitted the variety in the interpretation of "authority", but also stressed its "supra-individual" nature.

In this connection, theologians study one of the major problems in hermeneutics—interpretation. The tendency to integrate theology and bourgeois philosophy is clearly in evidence here. Theologians take as their point of departure recognition of the variety of interpretations and try to connect them to divine revelation by means of their concept of "event".

In modern theology, the traditional problems in hermeneutics (the interpretation of biblical texts) are combined with ideas taken from philosophical hermeneutics (the meaning of the biblical texts is interpreted on a broader plane linked with emotion in religious experience, and so on). The theological understanding of "interpretation" and "event" reflect this approach.

The Bible is viewed by theologians as a description of historical "events" which manifest divine revelation. These biblical "events" serve as a subject

[1] *Faith and Order, Louvain, 1971*, p. 14.

for interpretation by modern specialists in exegetics. Consequently, they are perceived by modern readers in a reconstructed, interpreted form. Thus the Bible's "authority" derives not from a real event, but from its interpretation.

Replying to the critics of this approach, ecumenists proclaim an "indivisible" link between the event and its interpretation. On the one hand, they say that all biblical events need to be interpreted and the interpretation itself becomes an event. On the other, the importance of the revelation's historical nature is stressed. The latter is just as important in interpretation as in events.

In interpreting events in the New Testament "Christ's coming" is taken as the basis and is reflected in other events which supposedly are also historical. Certain events are direct christological "witnessing", according to ecumenists, while others provide only indirect evidence. However, taking into account historical criticism and modern man's common sense, ecumenical theorists leave open to question the historical verity of various miracles (the immaculate conception, the ascension, and others).

Ecumenists strive to find a common criterion for evaluating interpretations. The treatment of the New Testament's central event, "Christ's coming", is regarded as the criterion for the accuracy of interpretation of the New Testament texts. By means of this criterion theologians strive to establish an inner link between the contradictory biblical texts. Ecumenists admit that biblical interpretation is impossible with-

out reservations, but they do not reject its meaning.

Following fashionable bourgeois philosophical ideas, some participants in ecumenical discussion introduce the notion of "situational" dependence of hermeneutical analysis. Situational analysis itself is applied to the content of biblical texts and to analogical situations in modern life. For instance, American theologians say that the notion of "God the liberator" should be the hermeneutical goal for the future, and have suggested reading and interpreting the books of the Bible from this point of view.

The materials from the Faith and Order Commission meeting in Bangalore in 1978 reflect attempts to use "eschatological hermeneutics" to analyse the basic principles of contextual theology, "the dialectical unity of the universal and the particular".[1]

To strengthen the Bible's role in religious and public life, ecumenists link its authority to church tradition and stress the need for the church's influence on interpreting biblical texts.

The ecumenical attempt to save the Bible from scientific criticism is inadequate. The spread of Marxist-Leninist ideas, the development of science, and real life itself reject the biblical dogmas. Ecumenists have proven powerless to formulate the principles for a single Christian understanding of the Bible.

Neither were ecumenists successful in unifying the ritual side of worship.

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[1] *The Ecumenical Review,* Vol. XXXI, No. 1, p. 25.

5. THE SEARCH FOR A SINGLE WORSHIP

The ritual aspect is one of religion's obligatory features. Religious ceremonies make it possible to constantly influence believers in the church's interests. The observance of rituals is one of the most stubborn remnants of the past in people's daily lives. An important problem in humanity's progress is therefore to overcome religious ritual and to unmask every attempt to preserve it, including ecumenical attempts.

The various forms of ritual are very important in dividing believers into various trends. Ecumenists are therefore faced with the complex task of establishing a link between various types of confessional ritual observance (ritual, semi-ritual, and so forth), and establishing unity in the liturgical structure.

Above all, however, they had to solve the question of the correspondence of religious rites to modern life today. Differences of opinion appeared in the approach adopted by representatives of various theological schools (European, East Asian and North American).

Mediaeval Christian traditions continue to exert a powerful influence on the thinking of church leaders in the European countries. The problem thus arises for ecumenists of how to reconcile archaic liturgical forms with modern man's life-style. There are fewer archaic features in American liturgical practice. In America the stress is placed on the preaching aspect of liturgy.

It should be noted that attempts to join together

all forms of religious rites were undertaken not only by organisations officially a part of the WCC. The "liturgical movement" which arose in the 1920s attempted to do this. This movement displayed a definite interest in the Orthodox liturgical tradition. Ecumenists are again turning to the experience accumulated by this movement. Orthodox ecumenist A. Shmeman observed that "the liturgical movement" is "a return from the pietistic and individualistic perception of liturgy to a liturgy newly conceived as an eternal self-revelation of the church".[1]

In Western Christianity almost any part of religious service is called liturgy. However, many ecumenical theologians now accept an interpretation of liturgy close to Orthodox and Anglican practice. In a report issued by the European Theological Commission it was noted that liturgy, as a rule, means eucharistic worship in its fullest meaning, i. e., a rite celebrated by a congregation of believers in which the sacrament of the Eucharist is central, but which also includes reading the written word, a sermon from the New Testament, prayers, and the swearing of the creed. The materials for the Uppsala Assembly stated that "the liturgy should express adequately both the anamnetic and epikletic character of the Eucharist. ...The epiklesis should be clearly expressed in all liturgies as the invocation of the Spirit upon the people of God and upon the whole Eucharistic

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[1] A. Shmeman, *An Introduction into Liturgical Theology*, YMCA-Press, Paris, 1961, p. 21 (in Russian).

action, including the elements".[1]. In the Orthodox Church liturgy also means eucharistic service (i. e., with communion).[2]

In order to further strengthen the influence of religion in society and to increase interest in religious rites, modern liturgists suggest re-examining the language used during religious service in certain instances. However, conflicts arise here not only because of so-called "vertical" (traditional) confessional divisions, but also because of tensions within the confessions between those who are in favour of leaving the basic content of liturgy unchanged and "modernists" who demand a radical re-examination of the liturgical language.

The secularisation process which takes in all aspects of social life has also had an important influence on the celebration of religious ceremonies. The observation of religious holidays and participation in liturgy has turned into a specific occupation of pious people, just like sport, leisure, family visits, and so on. Theologians, disturbed by such a turn of events, are trying to bring back the sacred meaning of religious holidays in the "church year", especially Sundays. To do this they are now referring to early Christian liturgy. Ecumenists observe that the liturgical practice of that time did not necessarily entail observance

[1] *Drafts for Sections. Uppsala 1968*, WCC, Geneva, 1968, pp. 108-09.

[2] See A. I. Georgievsky, *The Ritual in Divine Liturgy*, published by the Moscow Patriarchate, 1951, p. 7 (in Russian).

of Sunday liturgy on the regular non-working day for most people. Thus, ecumenists say, both "weekdays" and "holidays" were filled with liturgy. This "experience" was suggested for model life, as well: Sunday liturgy should be seen in the context of remembrance of "Christ's deeds", while liturgy on the other days should be filled with "gratitude, instruction, and reflection".

Ecumenists are trying to represent liturgy as a part of public life. According to them, it is linked with worship as an indivisible feature of human existence. As already mentioned, theologians draw the purpose of man's earthly life from worship. They popularise worship, especially in the form of prayer, using all the latest technological achievements, in all spheres of personal and public life. The conclusion follows from this that liturgy plays an important role in guiding society and the world created by God.

Theologians also try to link liturgy with gnoseological problems. Liturgical rites, in their view, are to some extent an act of cognition of God, for events which disclose and provide knowledge of divine manifestations are "reproduced" in liturgical rites.

Representatives of the American Theological Commission then formulated the question of the extent to which liturgical rites are adapted to modern cultural life, to man's thought processes in modern bourgeois society and, at the same time, tried to define the specific cognitive features of worship. Liturgy is described by them as man's recognition of his dependence on the supernatural. It supposedly contains

a manifestation of transcendental "reality", which determines man's actions. Ecumenists hold that liturgy witnesses man's recognition that the visible image of things and events does not represent the forces which he encounters directly, but discloses deeper-lying forces. The Uppsala Assembly issued materials which stress to an even greater degree liturgy's symbolic-mystical nature: "Symbols cannot be reduced to a shorthand for that which can be expressed in words. The symbols used in worship should have a transcendent dimension capable of penetrating into the mystery of reality which defies verbal description."[1]

Admission of this dependence means, for believers, submission to the life of the church community, its internal organisation and regulations. Theologians view this admission as a necessary condition for "nascent" liturgy. During liturgy, they say, the believer undergoes a transformation: his perception of time is altered and his personality is shaped.

Theologians stress the importance of ritual in maintaining the emotional factor in human life, which is increasingly influenced by secularisation. Let us look at this point in greater detail.

Liturgical rites do indeed play a definite socialising role in religious life. By taking part in liturgy the believer comes into contact with a society of people like himself. To a certain extent liturgy also serves as an external expression of emotion. Religious emo-

[1] *Drafts for Sections, Uppsala 1968*, p. 106.

tions, like any others, can be seen from one side as emotion experienced, and from the other side, as active emotional impulses stimulating man to action. Emotions are linked closely to action and the two condition one another. The performance of certain ceremonies also represents a definite form of activity which stimulates certain emotions and vice versa. Religious feelings are varied and highly changeable. They may include superstitious fear, religious ecstasy, hope for help from heaven, joy, resignation, and so on. Religious workers learned, during religion's long history, to make use of this link, and elaborated a "technique" for ceremonies which would most strongly affect the believers emotionally.

Frederick Engels stresses that in "convenient, handy and universally adaptable form, religion can continue to exist as the immediate, that is, the sentimental form of men's relation to the alien, natural and social, forces which dominate them, so long as men remain under the control of these forces".[1] This sentimental form of people's attitudes to the surrounding world is also manifested in religious life. The emotion most frequently encountered will be fear. Religious fear is linked to a sense of man's helplessness in the face of nature, society and, most importantly, of the powers that be. Yet the "fear of God" alternates, for the believer, with hope for supernatural help. All these feelings are supported in religious

[1] Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 383.

communities by sermons, rituals, etc., which are common to all believers.

It sometimes happens that religious emotions are accompanied by feelings of joy and celebration. This emotional elation is produced in the believer during solemn religious ceremonies and, for instance, after absolution during confession. Various searchings in life are also connected with religious emotion for the believer. But these searchings separate him from life in the final analysis, lead him away from the real world, and enclose him in a narrow circle of illusory dreams inspired by religion. Religious searchings are often expressed in passive self-absorption or in flashes of religious enthusiasm or fanaticism.

At the same time there are believers who find a sense of calm and resignation less in prayer than in aesthetic emotions or in worship, although they connect these emotions with religion. In giving themselves to these impressions and emotions, they temporarily escape from the circumstances in which they live in order to gather strength to continue and overcome their difficulties. There are religious believers in the Soviet Union whose religious view of life is strengthened by special circumstances of their individual lives, moral requirements, special features of their paths in life, and intimate emotions. The overcoming of such people's religious faith is extremely complex.[1]

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[1] See I. N. Yablokov, "Scientific Interpretation of the Dynamics of Believers' Psychological Moods in Prayer

Taking into consideration the complexity of this process, theologians have firmly resisted the elimination of religious rites and have attempted to strengthen the role of religious traditions and rites in modern life. Various ecumenical conferences have discussed the changes in religious-ritual symbolism and the limits to its adaptation to the secular world's conditions and notions.

Nonetheless, ecumenists have not succeeded in establishing a single teaching about religious rites. Nor have they succeeded in creating a single, universally Christian liturgical system. Conditions today have prevented them from doing this.

Lately, ecumenists have placed the accent on studying the attitude of different Christian churches towards the sacraments (the Eucharist, baptism, ordination and others).[1] Having admitted the variety of approaches to the sacraments (there is no unity of opinion even on the number of sacraments), ecumenists have sought to mark out methodological means of resolving this question. Ecumenical docu-

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and Penance" in *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma,* Issue 11, 1971, and others.

[1] In accordance with a resolution passed by the Nairobi Assembly, the WCC elaborated projects for ecumenical documents ("consensuses") on liturgical rites. However, as a special commission of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church observed, the document about "ordination" contains "traces of one-sided views held by the Protestant and 'free' churches. It contains very little of ancient catholic tradition" (*The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, No. 7, 1977, p. 56).

ments stress the importance of baptism as a sign of unity. Theologians also underline the importance of "communion" during sacraments. However, they also say that the Christian churches do not have a common concept of "communion": "Man is created in and for communion with God. In losing this his whole relationship with his fellow-men and with his natural environment is disturbed. In Jesus Christ God renews the communion in both dimensions. The Eucharist is the sacramental event in which this renewed communion is both celebrated and enacted, by the power of the Holy Spirit."[1] The "mystery" of this communion, ecumenists claim, is disclosed in the church's activity and in the Eucharist.

Ecumenists thus see the essence of human communion in transcendental, supernatural influence. Forms of communication such as prayer, baptism, the Eucharist, and others created by the church are applied to realise and animate this "inner", essentially mystical communion with God. Having created a special form of personal communion with God, the church strengthened its influence on the individual's mind and will.

In reality, human communication is a part of the system of social phenomena and a form of relations between social individuals and organised communities, as well as personal relations. The need for communication is also socially conditioned. Karl

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[1] "On the Way to Communion in the Sacraments" in *Faith and Order, Louvain, 1971*, p. 57.

Marx observed that workers' organisations display a new need, "the need for society—and what appears as a means becomes an end.... Association, society and conversation, which again has association as its end, are enough for them".[1]

Men's personal relations are only an indirect form of manifesting their material relations, independent of their minds and excluding any supernatural influence.

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The attention given by religious theorists to modern problems, together with their defence of traditional theological principles and use of ideas from secular bourgeois philosophy and sociology do not alter the essence of theology. It remains a theoretical encasing for an unscientific religious view of life. Ecumenists have not succeeded in creating a united theology—a theoretical platform for uniting the Christian churches.

The search for Christian unity undertaken to solve the churches' practical tasks presents an attempt to synthetically resolve religious, anthropological, and social problems in modern life. Attempts of this kind apparently will continue as the crisis in Christianity increases. However, a way out of the spiritual crisis

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[1] Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 313.

in capitalism, accompanied by a religious crisis, despite what ecumenists may claim, does not lie in renewing theological ideas, but in the revolutionary transformation of the foundations of exploitative society and overcoming religious beliefs.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the problems of Christian integration shows that there are attempts under way within the ecumenical framework to coordinate and resolve, from the religious point of view, of course, many of today's world-wide problems (war and peace, ecology, demography, and so on). In striving to create a single Christian ideology, ecumenists—representatives of the churches in the capitalist countries—draw on secular bourgeois philosophy and sociology, and use many conclusions from the natural and social sciences, making them serve theological purposes.

A Marxist-Leninist analysis of ecumenical ideology is therefore to a large extent a part of the critique of modern bourgeois philosophy and sociology.

The tendency to integrate theology and secular bourgeois ideology which is quite obvious in the ecumenical movement, has become especially powerful in our time as a result of attempts to counterbalance the revolutionary ideas of Marxism-Leninism. However, there are also attempts to adapt the ecumenical bodies to the mood of the broad masses of believers, who have been drawn into the struggle for peace and

social progress. The ecumenical bodies also cannot ignore the mood of believers in the socialist countries.

The dialectic of the ideological struggle necessitates an uncompromising critique of ecumenical religious ideas, many of which are only variations on bourgeois ideology. However, the measures taken by the WCC and the public statements made by individual religious leaders in defence of international détente, peace, security, disarmament, and social progress deserve full support.

The final communiqué issued by the Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties (Berlin, 1976) stated that "ever broader Catholic forces, members of other Christian communities and adherents to other faiths play an important role in the struggle for the rights of the working people and for democracy and peace. The Communist and Workers' Parties recognise the necessity of dialogue and joint action with these forces, which is an inseparable part of the struggle for the development of Europe in a spirit of democracy and in the direction of social progress".[1] The religious believers among the working people drawn into the ecumenical movement are such a force participating in the anti-imperialist struggle.

Of course, such joint actions do not mean a compromise between Christian and Communist ideologies. A scientific, Marxist-Leninist view of life, which re-

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[1] *For Peace, Security, Cooperation, and Social Progress in Europe. Berlin, June 29-30, 1976,* Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1976, p. 43.

flects the objective laws of the development of nature and society, is opposed to the religious view of life.

Ecumenism, as a definite religious movement, is a consequence of the religious crisis, which is a part of the general crisis of capitalism, a consequence of the secularisation process in public life, and a consequence of complex and contradictory processes within church life itself. The special features of the ecumenical movement are explained by these factors. Nonetheless, the growth of ecumenical tendencies is an undeniable fact.

The ecumenical movement on the whole, as well as attempts to create a "single" Christian ideology, is one form of overcoming the religious crisis and the general ideological and political crisis in bourgeois society. However, the religious crisis in the modern world has attained such scale and depth that it cannot be overcome by renewing religious forms.

REQUEST TO READERS

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CHRISTIAN ECUMENISM

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIANS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS HAVE LONG SOUGHT WAYS OF UNITING THE CHURCHES AND HAVE TRIED TO OVERCOME THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM. THIS IS THE BASIC TASK BEHIND THE MOVEMENT KNOWN AS THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT. ON THE BASIS OF SOLID FACTUAL MATERIAL AND AN ANALYSIS OF ECUMENICAL CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS, THE AUTHOR, YURI KRYANEV, CANDIDATE OF PHILOSOPHY, SHOWS THAT THEOLOGY SEES CHRISTIAN UNITY AS A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS SITUATION IN RELIGION. THE PRESENT STUDY SHOWS ECUMENISM'S PLACE AND ROLE IN THE MODERN IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AND CONCLUDES THAT THE HOPES FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY ARE UNFOUNDED.